

BBC

VICTORIA AND ALBERT: A MARRIAGE OF MISERY?

HISTORY

MAGAZINE

2017 HOT 100 LIST

September 2017 • www.historyextra.com



Richard III reigns supreme

Why the medieval monarch continues to fascinate

The lost battles of Viking Britain

How five forgotten clashes sealed the fate of the Anglo-Saxons

The death of Diana

Why Britain lost its stiff upper lip in 1997

The amazing life of a WWII Nazi hunter

THE DEVIL'S MONK

Medieval Europe's unholyest holy man



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WELCOME

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MAGAZINE

Beginning in the late 8th century, the British Isles were subject to around 300 years of Viking raids and invasions. It was an era of dramatic battles, as the Norsemen fought the Anglo-Saxons and others for control of these islands. While many of these clashes remain imprinted in the historical memory, others have faded into obscurity – even though, as historian Thomas Williams explains in this month's cover feature, "they helped shape the destiny of Britain". Turn to page 30 to discover his selection of **five forgotten Viking battles** that should be far better remembered.

This month sees the 20th anniversary of the tragic death of **Diana, Princess of Wales**. Like the assassination of John F Kennedy, it is an event that people can still vividly recall, even decades later. It also seems to have marked a turning point for Britain, as the nation shed its traditional reserve to mourn the passing of 'the people's princess'. On page 50, Dominic Sandbrook reflects on the summer of 1997.

Finally, in this issue we reveal the results of our **History Hot 100 list** of the people from the past who most interest you today. Once more a certain Yorkist king has secured the top spot, but there are some surprising inclusions further down. This year's poll has already attracted attention from the historical community and we've invited several high-profile historians to offer their thoughts on the results. Our coverage begins on page 57 and **we'd love you to join the conversation** as well, on our letters page and social media.



Rob Attar

Editor

BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Guy de la Bédoyère

Historical references to eclipses are invaluable because they can be tied to exact dates. Celestial phenomena also exerted powerful forces over past societies, telling us much about their mindsets.

● *Guy investigates celestial events that may have changed history on page 43*



Jane Ridley

The marriage of Victoria and Albert is often seen as a romantic romp in glorious technicolour, but the reality was more complicated, more conflicted and far more interesting than that.

● *Jane looks behind the facade of royalty's golden couple on page 20*



Thomas Williams

The Viking age in Britain was a time of strife that saw the forging of new nations and the cultural landscape irrevocably altered.

However, while some battles of the period are celebrated, others have been practically forgotten.

● *Find out more about Britain's forgotten Viking battles on page 30*

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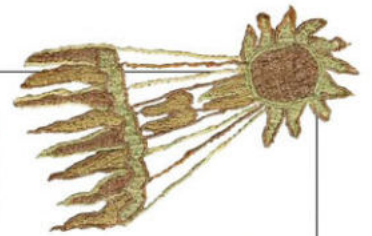


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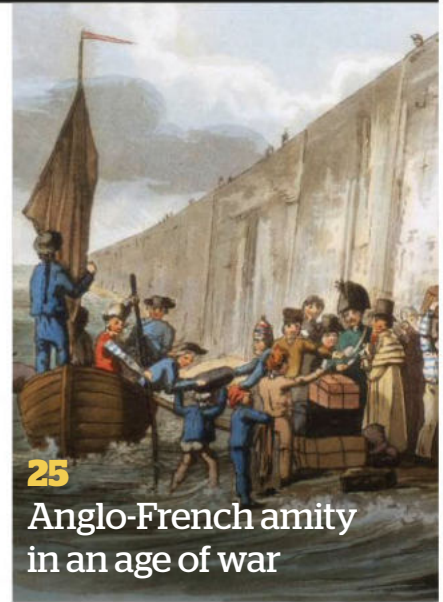
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Dominic Sandbrook highlights events that took place in **September** in history

ANNIVERSARIES

12 September 490 BC

A legend is born at Marathon

Athens claims victory against the mighty Persian army and a new sporting tradition is created

Traditionally dated to 12 September 490 BC, the battle of Marathon has gone down as one of the most celebrated clashes in world history. On one side were the Persians, then by far the greatest power in the eastern Mediterranean; on the other, the little democracy of Athens.

For years, the Athenians had supported Greek rebels in Asia Minor against their Persian overlords. So the Persian king, Darius, decided to teach them a lesson, sending his fleet towards the bay of Marathon. There his troops disembarked, preparing to march on Athens.

What followed became part of Athenian legend. Aided by only 1,000 men from the city of Plataea, the Athenian force faced a Persian army at least twice the size. Should they attack? The Athenians were

divided, but were finally swayed by a speech by their general Miltiades. If they fought and won, he declared, their country would “be free – and not free only, but the first state in Greece”.

So it was that on the dusty plain of Marathon, the Athenians advanced into legend. According to Herodotus, they actually ran at their Persian adversaries, singing their battle hymns. The Persian wings broke, and at last, stunned by the Athenians’ courage, Darius’s troops ran for the safety of their ships.

Tradition holds that afterwards the fleet-footed Pheidippides ran for almost 26 miles to bring the good news to Athens. It was this that inspired the invention of the modern marathon. It is a great story – but it is almost certainly untrue.



A detail from a relief on a second-century BC sarcophagus depicting the final phase of the battle of Marathon, fought between Athens and Persia

2 September 1870

Napoleon III surrenders to the Prussians

The ailing French emperor suffers a humiliating defeat at the battle of Sedan

The first two days of September 1870 were ones of abject humiliation for France. Six weeks earlier, when Napoleon III had declared war on Prussia, crowds had packed the streets of Paris chanting “To Berlin! To Berlin!” But by the time Napoleon’s army arrived at Sedan, in the Ardennes, the war was going badly. Early on 1 September battle began in earnest. Within hours it was clear the French were finished.

Already a sick man, 62-year-old Napoleon spent much of the day in a state of helpless paralysis. “If this man has not come here to kill himself, I don’t know what he has come to do,” wrote one observer.

In the afternoon, with his men under punishing fire, Napoleon ordered that the white flag be raised above the fortress of Sedan. Then he sent a message to Prussia’s Wilhelm I: “Monsieur my brother, not being able to die at the head of my troops, nothing remains for me but to place my sword in the hands of Your Majesty.”

At 6am on 2 September, Napoleon was shown into the Prussian headquarters. After signing a humiliating surrender, he was taken to a nearby castle and held in relative comfort. “It is impossible for me to say what I have suffered and what I am suffering now,” he wrote to his wife later that night.

He would, he said, have “preferred death to a capitulation so disastrous, and yet, under the present circumstances, it was the only way to avoid the butchering of 60,000 people. If only all my torments were concentrated here! I think of you, our son, and our unhappy country.”

GETTY IMAGES

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and presenter. His series about Britain in the 1980s was shown last year on BBC Two



AKG-IMAGES

Napoleon hands his sword to Prussian king Wilhelm I as an act of surrender in this chalk lithograph from 1870. The French emperor was deposed shortly afterwards and spent his final years living in England

17 September 1382

In Székesfehérvár, Hungary, Louis the Great's daughter **Mary (right)** is crowned 'King' of Hungary, to the displeasure of some of her noblemen.



3 September 1658

After the death of his father Oliver, Richard **Cromwell** becomes lord protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland.



22 September 1955

Britain's first commercial TV station, **ITV**, begins broadcasting in London. One of its first programmes is the game show *Take Your Pick* (left).



The National Suffragists Memorial in Christchurch, New Zealand, honours the women who fought for – and won – the right to vote

19 September 1893

New Zealand makes suffrage history

Twenty years of campaigning sees New Zealand women given the right to vote, to the dismay of many men

For the women of New Zealand, and indeed the world, 19 September 1893 was a day never to be forgotten. For two decades, suffrage campaigners, with Christian and temperance activists in the vanguard, had been demanding the right to vote. And that July, some 32,000 women – a quarter of the country's adult female European population – signed a number of petitions calling for reform.

For New Zealand's Liberal prime minister, Richard Seddon, the suffrage

issue presented a dilemma. Many of his own MPs were for it, but Seddon knew that women's suffrage might also mean victory for the temperance movement, which called for the prohibition of all alcohol.

Seddon played a double game, pretending to accept the case for women's votes, but secretly lobbying the upper house – the Legislative Council – to block the suffrage bill. But his plan backfired. When two independent

councillors found out, they changed their votes, allowing the bill to pass.

Still the anti-suffrage group did not give up, lobbying New Zealand's governor, the Earl of Glasgow, to refuse Royal Assent. But on 19 September, Glasgow gave his approval and New Zealand became the first self-governing nation to allow women to vote.

Not everyone rejoiced at the outcome. For some men at least, the prospect of such activists influencing politics was 'an evil day' indeed. "Our only chance of preventing New Zealand from playing the fool before high heaven," one man wrote to the *Christchurch Press*, "is to call in the aid of the women who would prefer to leave the game of politics to men."

17 September 1787

The US Constitution is signed

Thirty-nine men put pen to paper in Philadelphia

Four years after the end of its war with Great Britain, the new American republic was not a very happy place. Not only had the newly independent Thirteen Colonies run up enormous debts to pay for the war, but an agricultural depression had seen one rebellion erupt already.

For many veterans of the conflict, including General George Washington, the lesson was obvious: only a strong central government could prevent the republic from collapsing into anarchy. In May 1787 a constitutional convention met in Philadelphia to discuss the basis for the new government. Weeks of fierce argument followed, but by September they had a draft.

On 17 September, they were ready. Gathering in the Assembly Room of Independence Hall, the delegates listened to a patriotic address by Benjamin Franklin before taking it in turns to

sign the new Constitution.

Of the 39 men who signed that day, almost all had seen action during the struggle against Britain, and many had been commanders in the rebel army. At 81, Franklin was the oldest; by contrast, 26-year-old Jonathan Dayton was young enough to have been his grandson. Theirs was really only a symbolic gesture, since the document still needed to be ratified by the states. But symbols matter: there could hardly have been a more powerful sign of their

commitment to a common cause.

Not everybody approved of the new United States Constitution. Some delegates, who hated the thought of centralised federal authority, saw it as a betrayal of liberty, while New York's Alexander Hamilton, who wanted a much stronger government led by a president elected for life, even called it a "frail and worthless fabric". Most of them saw it as a practical expedient that would not last very long. Few imagined that it would endure for more than 200 years. **II**

Future US president General George Washington puts his argument for a strong central government to the Constitutional Convention in this 1856 painting by Junius Brutus Stearns



COMMENT / Dr Adam IP Smith

"The point of the Constitution was to limit the untrammelled power of the populace"

“It is striking that the US continues to be governed essentially by the institutional arrangements created in Philadelphia in 1787.

The Constitution has structured American political life in a profound way, making every substantive question (whether about health care, gun control, or almost anything else) a constitutional question. Consequently, the courts have become powerful, determinative political actors in a way that the Founders probably did not fully anticipate.

The Constitution was framed by men who were Republicans but not Demo-

crats. Its preamble locates sovereignty in the people, but it does not follow that the Founders wanted the sovereigns to actually govern. The point of the Constitution was to limit the untrammelled power of the populace, which is why they invented an electoral college to decide the presidency, and why they acceded to a bill of rights which ensured property rights would be protected by the courts whatever the legislature may want.

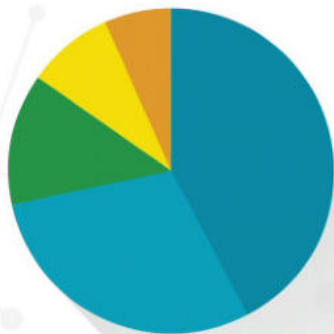
Initially, property rights included the right to own and trade in humans: southern delegates would have rejected the new constitutional plan had they not

secured additional representation in Congress and the electoral college for slave states, as well as a guarantee that the federal government would take responsibility for ensuring the return of fugitive slaves. **”**



Adam IP Smith is senior lecturer in American history at UCL. His new book is *The Stormy Present: Conservatism and the Problem of Slavery in Northern Politics, 1846–1865*

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EYE OPENER

Uzbek treasure returns home

A huge glazed tile stolen from the 12th-century Chashma-i Ayub monument near Bukhara in Uzbekistan has been returned after it surfaced in a London gallery. The decorative Islamic calligraphic tile, which dates from the 13th century, is just over half a metre high and was stolen in 2014.

UNTOLD STORY

"Black prisoners were often bullied and robbed of their clothing and possessions"



In 1796, more than 2,000 African-Caribbean men, women and children were transported from St Lucia and imprisoned at Portchester Castle near Portsmouth. English Heritage curator **Abigail Coppins** (left) explores their little-known story

Who were these men and women and how did they end up at Portchester Castle?

The men were soldiers in the French army serving in the local battalions on the Caribbean islands of St Lucia, St Vincent and Guadeloupe. Slavery on these islands had been abolished by France after the Revolution and most of the freed slaves went into service in the French army. When Fort Charlotte on St Lucia surrendered to the British in 1796, during the French Revolutionary Wars, the soldiers and their families were transported to Britain as prisoners of war.

How were they treated when they arrived at the castle?

The PoWs arrived in October 1796 and were completely unprepared for the cold and wet weather – many had little clothing or no shoes. What's more, many of the prisoners were sick from the long ship journey to Britain or injured from fighting on St Lucia.

I was surprised to discover that prison commissioners and doctors were actually sympathetic to the plight of these men and women. They organised extra clothing for the prisoners, such as vests, thick socks and new shoes.

The prison doctor also tried to feed them up with extra potatoes, which they clearly didn't like much, as within a week or two they requested bread instead. Even

this was agreed to, but only after the supply of potatoes had been used up.

How did other prisoners at the castle react to their new cellmates?

Black prisoners were often bullied by European prisoners who robbed them of their clothing and possessions. Prison commissioners reported that "they [the PoWs] had been robbed and plundered by the European prisoners, they considering themselves as a superior race of beings to the unfortunate Blacks". The decision was eventually taken to move most of the African-Caribbean prisoners onto two prison ships to protect them.

Meanwhile, within a year or so of their arrival at Portchester, Britain and France began exchanging PoWs. A decree of 1798 ordered that any black soldiers (and their families) who had returned to France from the colonies or English prisons would have to go to the Ile d'Aix, off the west coast of France, where they would be formed into one company. Some did make it back to the Caribbean, though, where they were, and still are, celebrated as important freedom fighters against slavery.



Abigail Coppins is curator of archaeological collections at English Heritage

Portchester Castle, the unlikely home to African-Caribbean PoWs in the 18th century



5 things you might not know about... Jane Austen

Following the recent unveiling of the new Jane Austen £10 banknote – and the 200th anniversary of her death – we bring you five facts about the English author.

1 She enjoyed ball games

Jane loved, and excelled at, the game bilbo catch. The game involves a wooden cup with a handle, and a small ball attached to the cup by a string; the player tosses the ball and catches it in the cup. Jane could allegedly catch the ball more than 100 times in succession.

2 She was the first to write about a doorbell

The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Jane as being the first-cited author of 39 words. Double-bed, doorbell and dinner-party are among them.

3 She was engaged... for one night

In December 1802 Harris Bigg-Wither, the younger brother of her close friends Elizabeth, Catherine and Alethea, made a proposal of marriage to Jane. Although she initially accepted, by the following morning Jane had changed her mind, unwilling to marry a man she did not love.

4 She is remembered in space

The discovery of thousands of new surface features on Venus between 1990 and 1992 saw one of them named after Jane Austen. The Jane Austen crater is 30 miles in diameter and can be found in the planet's southern hemisphere.

5 She had a sweet tooth

Food and meals are referenced often in Austen's letters and she became fond of Bath buns (large cakes similar to French brioche bread, served warm and soaked in butter) during her time in the city. Sponge cake was also a favourite – in June 1808 she wrote to her sister: "You know how interesting the purchase of a sponge-cake is to me."

28 tonnes

The weight of the British Mark IV female D51 tank (named Deborah). Deborah, which saw action at Cambrai in 1917, was recently moved to a new home at the Cambrai Tank Museum

NEW FIND

Letters reveal life on Roman frontier

A 2,000-year-old holiday request has been discovered

A cache of 25 tablets dating to the first-century AD has been discovered at Vindolanda Roman fort at Hadrian's Wall.

Discovered in a trench at the deepest level of the site, most of the letters are written in cursive script (in which characters are joined together) on thin slivers of birch. But one letter has been written on a double-leaved oak tablet comprised of two pieces of timber folded together. The use of higher quality wood, experts believe, could be an indication of the importance of its contents.

The letters bear a striking resemblance to another set of correspondence discovered at the fort in 1992. The original letters included first-person accounts of cold feet, beer shortages and even an invitation to a birthday celebration. One character from the 1992 stash – Masclus – is believed to appear again in this new set of tablets, this time requesting a period of leave rather than more supplies of beer.

Experts will now scan the tablets using infrared photography to make the faint black ink legible and allow them to decipher the complicated cursive script.

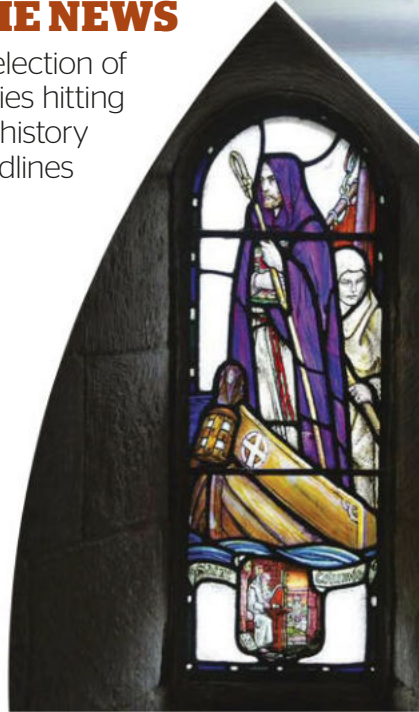


One of the cache of tablets undergoing cleaning by the Vindolanda Trust

THE VINDOLANDA TRUST/ALAMY/ MUSEUM SOUTHEASTERN DENMARK

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of stories hitting the history headlines



Experts may have identified St Columba's cell

Radiocarbon dating of the charred remains of a wattle hut on the Scottish island of Iona, excavated in 1957, has given a date of AD 540–650. Experts now believe the hut belonged to St Columba, the Irish abbot who helped bring Christianity to Scotland in 563 AD.

British and Irish hillfort details online for the first time

The locations and details of every hillfort in Britain and Ireland – 4,147 in total – are now available on an online database. The database can be accessed for free at <https://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk>

Viking toilet unearthed in Denmark

Analysis of the faeces layer of a 2m-deep hole that was found at a Viking settlement in Denmark suggests it could be the country's oldest toilet – about 1,000 years old.

Layer of household refuse

Layer of raw clay, closing off the latrine

Layer of human faeces, dated to the Viking age

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

The Lake District has won Unesco World Heritage status – this shot shows Derwentwater; a hut on Iona is thought to have belonged to St Columba (pictured here on a window at Edinburgh Castle); Eggardon hillfort, one of 4,147 featured on a new website; a 1,000-year-old toilet in Denmark



Lake District awarded Unesco status

The Lake District has become the 31st site in the UK and British Overseas Territories to be placed on the Unesco World Heritage List. Other sites listed this year are Okinoshima island – an ancient 'men-only' religious site – and Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.



The historians' view...

Have high-rises ever been the answer to our housing woes?

In the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster, we asked two experts to offer their perspectives on the impact of multi-storey public housing on Britain's social landscape since the Second World War

Interviews by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

“As an experiment in social democracy, high-rises were a failure. There's very little evidence that tenants wanted to live in them

PETER SHAPELY

Tower blocks were originally aimed at a wide range of social groups, primarily from slum clearance programmes. They were meant to be not only a modern, clean and affordable alternative to the slums but also a vehicle for developing social democracy.

In theory, elderly people would take the ground-floor flats, while children would benefit from open spaces and playgrounds, taking them off streets that were becoming increasingly busy with traffic. Inside, modern facilities offered the type of provision that residents could only dream of in the old, overcrowded and unhealthy slums.

This was a top-down process. Local authorities had to apply quick and affordable solutions to the chronic problems presented by the slums. Labour and Conservative governments increasingly pushed local

authorities into adopting high-rise solutions. Many councils were reticent, but subsidy from the state meant they were, in practice, given little choice. Tenants had even less influence on the decision-making process. There is very little evidence that they wanted to live in high-rise blocks of flats.

As an experiment in social democracy, high-rises were a failure. They simply did not evolve as coherent communities. From the 1950s, many affluent and skilled workers left the old slum areas, either for new towns, overspill estates or to buy their own homes in working-class suburbs. This increased the concentration of poor and displaced people, as well as immigrant families, in poorer parts of urban areas, especially inner-city developments. It was these social groups that tended to be concentrated in the new flats.

Soon, local councils were starting to realise that high-rises were unpopular with families and the elderly – and that, in some cases, they were expensive to manage and maintain. The Ronan Point tragedy of 1968 – when four people were killed after a London block of flats partially collapsed – gave the authorities a further wake-up call. But the expense of building from scratch and the parlous state of the nation's finance meant that, when the government did take action – in the Housing Acts of 1969 and 1974 – it proposed wide-ranging improvement programmes rather than new developments.

A councillor and architects discuss plans for the Moss Heights development in Glasgow, 1953. Proponents of high-rise flats believed that they would provide a safe, clean, modern alternative to the old slums



By the 1980s, local councils – and the high-rises that they managed – found themselves under huge financial pressure, as rising crime and cuts in public spending started to bite. Councils increasingly began to outsource developments to housing action trusts (similar to housing associations). This was partly due to pressure from the Thatcher government. But it was also because they couldn't afford to maintain a large stock of housing with rising problems.

Despite these body blows, over the last couple of decades high-rise living has made something of a comeback. And that's down to two very different processes: culture and cost. Contemporary urban lifestyles, with a more positive cultural attitude to living in the city, has transformed many people's attitudes to the high-rise.

Meanwhile, refurbished apartment blocks have given residents the opportunity to live in affordable inner-city homes, offering views and facilities often out of reach of those who rent or buy from the private sector. As the cost of housing has rocketed – and supply dwindled – such 'luxuries' have become an ever more precious commodity.



Dr Peter Shapely is a reader and head of school at Bangor University



Women talk in front of the Gorbals tower blocks, Glasgow, 1964



Fire devastates the 24-storey Grenfell Tower in west London, June 2017

“The sheer prominence of tower blocks in our cities has, for decades, made them ideal targets for journalists’ abuse

MILES GLENDINNING

The original postwar crusade to build large-scale, multi-storey public housing in the UK was driven by a mixture of idealism and pragmatism. It was idealistic because it sought to ‘solve the housing problem’ and ‘give the people homes’. There was architectural idealism too – a modernist yearning to break from the 19th-century urban pattern of the mixed-together, dilapidated, old industrial town. And it sought to make that break in the most arresting way possible: through tall towers set in open space shaping a bold, new, modern urban skyline.

The high-rise drive was pragmatic because the early postwar ideals of sweeping reconstruction were not always easily achievable. Slender towers were, it was believed, ideal for exploiting small gap sites and for maximising ‘housing gain’ within the protracted, multi-stage redevelopment programmes that usually prevailed in the 1950s.

Some parts of Britain embraced the high-rise revolution with greater enthusiasm than others. London, with its dense population pressures, saw large-scale multi-storey building from the outset. In England’s provincial cities, where terraced housing had for so long dominated the landscape, multi-storey blocks tended to be smaller. Glasgow, meanwhile, saw a uniquely high proportion of housing built in blocks of 25 or more storeys – probably because of the city’s strong association with tenements.

There were also enormous variations across mainland Europe – both in the ways that public housing was funded and built, and in its architectural form. In West Germany, social housing was often constructed by so-called ‘public interest’ housing companies. In East Germany, the many massive *Plattenbau* (concrete panel) developments of the Erich Honecker era (1971–89) were built by a combination of state enterprises and socialist co-operatives. While tall, slender ‘point blocks’ were the high-rise of choice across Britain, on the continent long ‘slab’ blocks tended to dominate, laid out in vast developments on the city periphery.

Beyond Europe, in booming Hong Kong and Singapore, severe land constraints prompted the development of the tallest public-housing tower blocks in the world, many over 40 storeys high. These exceptionally well-run programmes still thrive today, free from the crises and stigmas that have

dogged British public housing.

Multi-storey public housing has sparked controversies in many countries. But public discourse in Britain has been especially vitriolic. The tradition of vehemently rejecting each successive phase of house-building stems from the architect and critic AWN Pugin in the early 19th century and has been adopted by generations of impassioned architectural journalists. The prominence – and, in many cities, controversial nature – of public-housing tower blocks have made them ideal targets for this kind of invective. ‘Destruction catastrophes’ such as the partial collapse of Ronan Point, and the far worse disaster at Grenfell Tower

earlier this year, have only increased their vulnerability. **H**



Miles Glendinning is professor of architectural conservation at the University of Edinburgh

DISCOVER MORE

RADIO

► ***Streets Apart***, a new series on the history of social housing, will be airing on BBC Radio 4 from 28 August

LISTEN AGAIN

► To listen to Jonathan Freedland discussing the Grenfell Tower disaster on BBC Radio 4’s **Long View**, go to bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08y24f5



PAST NOTES

COFFEE

OLD NEWS

Kissing in public

Portsmouth Evening News
17 December 1902

Although the British are frequently accused of being prudish, it's our American cousins who were often the most worried about society falling into disarray. It might surprise you to learn that many states in the USA used to outlaw kissing in public, right into the 20th century. In 1902, the *Portsmouth Evening News* reported that the entire country was about to attempt to abolish all public kissing, and introduce a fine of five dollars for anyone caught indulging in the practice. Of course, this was met with widespread disapproval and a campaign to repeal the old Puritan 'blue laws' of Massachusetts.

The campaign was aided by a recent case that had caused much amusement and indignation in Boston, when a prominent citizen had been arrested for kissing his wife in the street. But the USA was not alone in its kissing prohibition. Italy's Milan had similar laws against kisses in public places and, the *Portsmouth Evening News* reported, a pair of perfectly respectable lovers had recently been hauled before the magistrate and fined 12 shillings for kissing in the park. This led the paper to joke that a similar law imposed in England would make income tax unnecessary!

News story sourced from *britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk* and rediscovered by **Fern Riddell**. Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES



A 1960s promotional image for Nescafé, the first freeze-dried instant coffee

As our love affair with coffee shows no sign of abating, **Julian Humphrys** drinks in its history

Where does the word coffee come from?

From the Turkish 'kahveh', itself a version of 'qahwah', originally an Arabic word for a type of wine. Coffee is believed to have reached Arabia from Africa in the 15th century. By the 16th century it had spread to Persia, Egypt, Syria and Turkey, and was probably first introduced to Europe by Venetian traders at the end of that century.

Why did people drink it?

Certainly not for the taste. Coffee drinkers in the 18th century routinely compared it to ink, soot, mud and excrement. But they believed it had medicinal qualities and valued the fact that, unlike ale or spirits, it gave you a mental boost.

Where did the English drink it?

Primarily in coffee houses. The first ones opened in Oxford and London in the early 1650s. These new coffee houses became fashionable places for men (women were excluded) to meet, do business, discuss the news of the day and exchange ideas. They soon gained the nickname of 'penny universities', as that was the price of a cup of coffee. Each coffee house tended to have a particular clientele, attracting

men with similar interests, occupations or political viewpoints. Lloyd's of London insurance market, for example, had its origins in Edward Lloyd's Coffee House on Lombard Street, where merchants, shippers and ship insurance underwriters would meet.

Were these coffee houses universally popular?

They certainly weren't with Charles II. The potentially subversive nature of the discussions being held in some of London's coffee houses led Charles to make an unsuccessful attempt to suppress them in 1675.

When did instant coffee appear on the scene?

New Zealander David Strang patented instant coffee in 1890. Then, in 1909, George Washington, a British chemist in Guatemala, noticed powdery condensation forming on his coffee carafe. Three years later, after extensive experimentation, he launched the world's first mass-produced instant coffee which he called Red E Coffee. In 1938 the Nestlé Corporation introduced a freeze-dried coffee which it had developed at the behest of the Brazilian government to help preserve the country's coffee harvest surplus. Its name? Nescafé. **H**



Michael Wood on... the Conquistadors

“Of all the stories in history, this has got everything”

“The other day I met up with a couple of friends who write scripts for cinema. We got talking about great stories in history that could be turned into blockbusters. History of course has always been a great subject for the movies. Only this year we’ve had some epic tales from modern history: the Partition of India, Dunkirk, not to mention the upcoming *Darkest Hour* (the second Churchill movie in a few months).

But I go further back in time for my dream epic: the Spanish conquest of the New World – Pizarro and the Incas; Atahualpa and the room of gold; the El Dorado expedition; Orellana; de Soto; the amazing 3,000-mile Almagro expedition into Chile across the Andes; the Altiplano and the Atacama... take your pick. There are incredible tales of endurance, bravery and cruelty, some beyond belief, like Pizarro’s disastrous Amazonian expedition.

Yet the ultimate epic, it seems to me, would be *Cortés and Montezuma: The Conquest of Mexico*. This has got everything and, of all the stories in history, it seems to me the most throat-grabbingly dramatic, and the most poignant and tragic. Adam Smith called the Spanish conquest the greatest event in the history of the world. Whether it still appears that way now is something for the reader to judge; but this was the moment when an entire continent was opened up to the Europeans, its people dispossessed, its natural resources plundered. Ninety per cent of the native people are thought to have died of war and disease in the century after 1492. The Atlantic slave trade, too, it is often forgotten, brought 12 million Africans to the Americas to replace the lives lost in the age of conquest. Our modern globalised world seems to me to be built on the violence of the Conquista, and most countries of the Americas – not least the USA – are still dealing with the consequences.

It was exactly 500 years ago that, for the first time, the Europeans encountered an unknown civilisation – not a tribe or a culture, but a true civilisation, with large-scale

architecture, civic order, law, books, writing. On the shores of the Yucatan, the Córdoba expedition was amazed to see great pyramids – and hence gave it the name ‘El Gran Cairo’. Outside of the realms of *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who* or films like the uncannily evocative *Arrival*, it is so rare that such encounters take place. How do we recognise, how to we ‘decode’ the Other? Were the native Mayans another creation not mentioned in the Bible? And for the indigenous peoples, even greater issues: who were the newcomers with their technologies of death? Demigods or demons? Or just another kind of human? On the answers, fatefully, depended their slim chance of survival.

That encounter led inexorably to Cortés’s conquest of Mexico. In 1517 when Córdoba made those first contacts with the Maya of the Yucatan, Hernán Cortés had been in Cuba for eight years, making money from cattle, slaves and gold panning. An inveterate gambler and womaniser, he was biding his time for the main chance. A man of unfathomable steely will, in my dream movie he would be played by the young Robert de Niro.

Spurred on by rumours of a great empire in the plains of Mexico, Cortés made his bid in 1519 with a private army of 530 conquistadors. The story is full of unforgettable scenes, even before they reach ‘Mexico’, the magical city in the lake; the first meeting with Montezuma, told by both sides with riveting immediacy; the nerve-shredding cat and mouse that led to a fateful massacre; then the Aztec fightback, the Spanish defeat on the ‘Night of Sorrows’; then Cortés’s unbelievable tenacity to regroup and lay siege to Mexico in 1521; and the heroic last stand commemorated in Aztec poetry – a Mexican *Iliad*.

And as for Cortés, in the end we are left with the mystery of his personality, his motivation, his implacable will: things with which the historian must always wrestle.

I left my friends with a copy of Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s *Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*. A Hollywood movie after all these years? The anniversary of the war is only four years off, but maybe it’s not too late. And if anyone needs a scriptwriter, you know where to find me! **H**

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series and his books include *Conquistadors* (BBC Books)



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

LETTERS



Was Ezekiel's vision of a wheel within a wheel in the sky an early UFO sighting?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Ancient UFOs

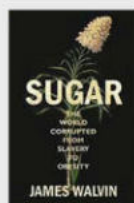
Julian Humphrys claims UFOs were first reported earlier than we might think (*Past Notes*, August). They were, however, reported earlier than Julian Humphrys might think! Sightings date back to biblical times, one example being Ezekiel's wheel. Meanwhile, Greek and Roman literature refers to fiery shields in the sky.

The descriptions tend to follow the preconceptions of the period of reporting: wheels and shields in classical times; airships at the end of

the 19th and start of the 20th centuries; rockets in Scandinavia in the late 1940s; and spaceships more recently.

Andrew Hudson, Cumbria

● We reward the Letter of the Month writer with our 'History Choice' book of the month. This issue, it's *Sugar: The World Corrupted, from Slavery to Obesity* by James Walvin. Read the review on page 69



Raj reflections

Your feature *The Bloody Road to Partition* (August) brought to mind something that happened while I was travelling in India with two American friends a couple of years ago.

While in Jaipur we engaged the services of an elderly university professor who supplemented his income by acting as a private guide for tourists. As he drove us around on the second day, my American companions, who can never resist the opportunity for some gentle ribbing over Britain's colonial past, asked the professor for his views on the Raj, in full expectation of an anti-colonial diatribe.

Turning to them, he said: "You know the worst thing the British did?" My friends looked at me smugly, waiting for me to be put in my place. But the look on their faces changed to one of

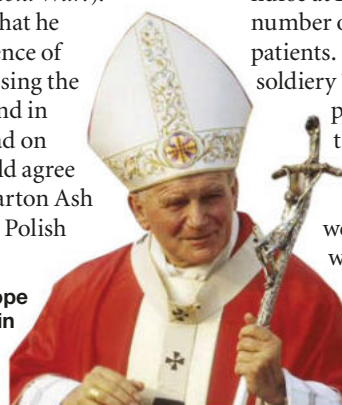
disbelief when he smiled at them and said: "They left India 50 years too early." If anything, I was more astonished than they!

Robert Readman, Bournemouth

Papal credit

I thoroughly enjoyed David Reynolds' article on the Cold War in the July issue (*What Brought a Thaw in the Cold War?*). However, I was disappointed that he made no mention of the influence of Pope John Paul II when discussing the founding of Solidarity in Poland in 1980, and the influence this had on subsequent events. Many would agree with the historian Timothy Garton Ash when he said that, without the Polish

Many credit Pope John Paul II with a role in dismantling communism



pope, there would have been no Solidarity, that without Solidarity there would have been no change in Soviet policy towards eastern Europe, and without the change in Soviet policy there would have been no velvet revolutions in 1989.

The role of Pope John Paul II in these events was recognised by all the major figures involved, including Mikhail Gorbachev and President Bush. Any discussion of the collapse of the communist bloc would therefore surely be incomplete without some reference to Pope John Paul II.

James J McDevitt, Edinburgh

Defeat at Dunkirk?

I write in response to your *Dunkirk* piece (July). My late father was a Dunkirk veteran. Being in the merchant navy and having just completed an Atlantic run, he volunteered to cross the channel to Dunkirk in a small Thames tug.

On arrival, drawn up on the beach was a Guards platoon "complete with shiny boots" who refused to get on the tug as there were "no proper cabins for officers". Later, taking on board more grateful soldiery, my father was intrigued to learn the reason for the high morale of the army. Most had joined the army as the only real alternative to unemployment and starvation, not to fight the Germans. A quote by one of the rescued soldiers was that being obliged to leave the heavy military equipment on the beach meant "no more soldiering outside of the UK for me".

For the rest of his life my father never doubted that at Dunkirk the British empire had been defeated by the resurgent Germany.

Meanwhile, my late mother was a nurse at Dartford Hospital where a number of Dunkirk casualties were patients. She had noticed that evacuated soldiery "were coming back with pockets full of French money that they'd made from selling British army spares to the French underworld. They were keen to get off the beaches with their money, but we were all glad that Britain was out of the war with so few casualties, unlike the earlier war."

GETTY IMAGES



A flotilla of small boats pictured after helping with the mass evacuation of Dunkirk. But, asks Sylvia Baguette, how did such small craft cross the Channel?

Considering my parents' independent observations, if the army of 1914 was made up of enthusiasts, that of 1939 was well aware of never getting the "land fit for heroes" they'd fought for, had completely different motives and was far more opportunistic in outlook.

James Wells, MRINA, Essex

Little ships mystery

I found the article on Dunkirk very interesting, especially the photos of the "little ships". My father came from Chester and told me how one morning in 1940 he walked down by the river Dee to the area where the pleasure boats tied up. To his surprise, they were not there. When he asked a member of staff he knew, they could only say they were "gone".

Weeks later he was told they had "gone" to Dunkirk. But how could river pleasure craft travel to Dunkirk from Chester? How would they even reach the south coast? They were not constructed for sea voyages. When I have asked in Chester on recent visits, no one has been able to confirm my father's account. So how did all these 'little ships' travel to the south coast ports, never mind cross the Channel? I wonder if any of your readers might know.

Sylvia Baguette, Crewe

Big questions

Professor Mokyr's article on the intellectual revolution in the June issue (*How Europe Won the Race to Prosperity*)

was excellent. If I was still teaching my course on research methods I would require all my students to read it. In the course I spent time discussing the very important questions: "Where do ideas come from and how does research get started?" This article points out the need for cross-disciplinary study when it comes to questions of history, and has made a valuable contribution to helping to understand why the intellectual revolution occurred in Europe and the Americas instead of other parts of the world.

The visual arts, music, literature, the social sciences and the physical sciences are not separate disciplines. They are part of the whole movement of human endeavour and move together, each affecting the other. The forces behind the industrial revolution can be traced back to ideas of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation.

Hugh Canham, emeritus professor of forest and resource economics, New York

WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words.

email: letters@historyextra.com

Post: Letters, *BBC History Magazine*, Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN

SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



Following HBO's announcement of new drama *Confederate*, which will imagine an America where the South won the right to secede from the Union, what alternative history drama would you like to see and why?

Alejandra Fuenzalida Henry VIII not breaking with Rome. Would England be Catholic now? Or what would have happened if Richard III had won the battle of Bosworth?

@_Say_What_Again The JFK assassination. What would the US Civil Rights movement have looked like if Kennedy was never shot? Equal rights sooner? Less violence?

Steven Brake James II successfully resists William Of Orange. The Glorious Revolution never happens, but nor do the Acts of Union in 1707

Ed Waddington Montezuma defeats Cortés and gains knowledge of gunpowder and iron working

Claire Greyson The princes in the Tower surviving and producing heirs

Anthony George One where the transatlantic slave trade never occurred

@sazenrose Henry Tudor loses the battle of Bosworth Field. Alliance with Portugal through marriage and Yorkist dynasty continues

@StevenCheverton Churchill was killed in the trenches during WWI. The knock-on effect for GB's military/imperial/social histories would have been profound

Brad Sprauer If the Jacobites had won. It would have had a profound effect on not only Scotland and England, but even the colonies and subsequently America as we know it, as Scottish immigrants played a large part in early American history

Nat Marsh Harold Godwinson staying on the south coast to defeat William before then going north to defeat Hardrada and Tostig

@mwoodgates An America that didn't gain independence from Britain, imagine cricket with an American accent!

“Albert made Victoria feel that she was inadequate – his intellectual and moral inferior”

To the outside world, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were the golden couple, exemplars of traditional family values. Yet, as **Jane Ridley** reveals, behind the romanticised veneer, Albert's thirst for power was putting the marriage under intense pressure



Franz Xaver Winterhalter's painting *The Royal Family* in 1846 shows Victoria and Albert with their children (from left to right): Alfred, Edward, Alice, Helena and Vicky. Sadly, inter-family relations weren't always as blissful as this idealised portrait suggests



Victoria and Albert's marriage

After the sudden and tragic death of Prince Albert in 1861, the grief-stricken Queen Victoria dedicated herself to memorialising her marriage as a perfect union. She herself composed large parts of the first biography, *The Early Years of the Prince Consort* (1867). At Frogmore, the royal burial ground at Windsor, she built a mausoleum and commissioned the sculptor Marochetti to create effigies of herself and the prince lying side-by-side – though it would be another 40 years before she would take her place beside her beloved Albert. Thanks, in part, to the queen's efforts, her marriage to Albert, prince of the German duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, came to be seen as one of the great love matches of all time, celebrated (with varying degrees of accuracy) in films such as *The Young Victoria* and, more recently, the ITV drama *Victoria*.

As Queen Victoria's journal shows, from the moment she saw the prince arriving at the foot of the staircase at Windsor in 1839, she was smitten. Five days later she summoned him to her blue closet and proposed to him. But the marriage was not the romantic happy-ever-after story that Victoria constructed. It was far more complex than that.

Like all dynastic marriages, this was an alliance with a political agenda. As the second son of a minor German duke (Coburg is smaller than the Isle of Wight) and a mere Serene Highness, the lowest grade in the royal

hierarchy, Prince Albert was Victoria's poor relation, although the two were first cousins. But what he lacked in rank and wealth, he made up for with education and self-confidence, and he had been trained from his teens by King Leopold of Belgium, the cousins' mutual uncle, to marry Victoria and take over the British throne.

Albert began his quest for power immediately after the marriage. Within months he had moved his writing desk next to the queen's. At first, Victoria resisted Albert's attempts to remove her trusted governess, Baroness Lehzen, from control of the court. But as one pregnancy followed another in quick succession – seven of Victoria's nine children were born in the first 10 years of the marriage – the queen was in no condition to resist. Albert fired Lehzen and assumed control of the household, introducing much-needed reforms and economies.

King in all but name

In November 1840, when her first child was born, Victoria gave Albert the key to the cabinet boxes. He started to attend meetings with ministers, dealing with the queen's correspondence and drafting business letters for the queen to copy out. At dinners with politicians, Albert could be heard prompting Victoria in German before she spoke. By now he had become her private secretary.

In 1850 he described his position thus: "As the natural head of [the queen's] family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, sole confidential adviser in



Victoria and Albert pictured in 1854. The prince's grip on power grew throughout their marriage

politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of her government, he is, besides, the husband of the queen, the tutor of the royal children, the private secretary of the sovereign, and her permanent minister." Not only was Albert king in all but name but he intervened in politics, pursuing an active role in foreign policy.

Victoria declared herself grateful to Albert for relieving her of the tiresome work of the sovereign. Women, she believed, were not fit to rule. "It is a reversal of the right order of

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

Victoria and Albert's highs and lows

10 October 1839	15 October 1839	10 February 1840	21 November 1840	9 November 1841	1842
Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, aged 20, arrives at Windsor on a visit to Queen Victoria, his first cousin, three months older than him.	Victoria, who considers that Albert "is beautiful" and declares that "My heart is quite going", proposes to Albert. She tells no one beforehand, except the prime minister, Lord Melbourne.	Victoria and Albert are married at the Chapel Royal, St James's.	Vicky, Victoria's first child, is born. Around this time, Victoria gives Albert the keys to the cabinet boxes .	Birth of Albert Edward (Bertie), Prince of Wales. This is followed by the birth of Alice, 25 April 1843; Alfred, 6 August 1844; Helena, 25 May 1846; Louise, 18 March 1848; and Arthur, 1 May 1850. In total, that's seven children in 10 years.	Baroness Lehzen (above), Victoria's former governess, who has been charged with the running of the court, is dismissed. Albert takes over and introduces important reforms, making the court more efficient and cutting waste .
 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in court dress, 1854					





GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

Victoria declared herself grateful to Albert for relieving her of her tiresome work. Women, she believed, were not fit to rule

things which distresses me much and which no one, but such a perfection, such an angel as he is – could bear and carry through.” But Victoria had a vein of steel, and her commitment to her birthright was absolute. She was torn between her passionate desire to be a perfect ‘Victorian’ wife to Albert – an angel in the house, all sweetness and light – and her Hanoverian inheritance.

The royals retreat

The image of the Victorian monarchy, crafted by Albert, and projected in paintings such as Winterhalter’s *The Royal Family in 1846* (see previous page) was one of a child-centred bourgeois family on the throne. But the fact was that the royal marriage was unlike any other. It took place within the peculiar context of the court.

As a young maid of honour in Victoria’s court in the 1850s, Mary Bulteel would watch the door silently close on the queen’s private apartments. How she longed to get to know the queen, her employer, but Victoria barely spoke to her.

The withdrawal of the royal family from the public space of the court into the private apartments was Albert’s doing. It meant that Victoria’s life was no longer bounded by the court, as it had been in the early days of her reign, when her court was a Camelot, famed for its parties and youthful high spirits. The creation of a private sphere – of a space dedicated to domestic life – was one of the most far-reaching changes made by Albert in his drive to reform the monarchy.

Disliking London with its late nights, and sneered at by the aristocracy as a German beggar, Albert persuaded Victoria that her enjoyment of society was wrong. True happiness, he claimed, was to be found in the country with her beloved prince and her young family. Albert designed the new family home at Osborne on the Isle of Wight, safely inaccessible from a prying public. Even more remote was Balmoral, the castle he created in the Scottish Highlands, 500 miles from London.

At Osborne or Balmoral, the family could live the simple outdoors life that Victoria later depicted in her *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*. Victoria believed her “happy domestic home” made her more popular than any other sovereign and gave a good example to her subjects.

At court, Albert introduced new rules, distancing the royal family from the household – that is, the courtiers and officeholders such as the Lord Chamberlain. He ordered that no man was to sit in the presence of the queen. Throughout Victoria’s reign, prime ministers stood during audiences; only two were accorded the special privilege of sitting in the queen’s presence – her favourite Disraeli, who declined the offer, and Lord Salisbury, who was too heavy to stand. The hated Gladstone was never asked to sit, even in his eighties.

Albert forbade maids of honour from sitting in his presence or speaking to him unless spoken to. He went everywhere attended by an equerry, thus emphasising his royal status. In his relations with the courtiers of the household, Albert was cold and stiff.



1842

Albert starts to attend the queen’s meetings with ministers, and writes notes of the meetings. Victoria now talks of “We”, not “I”.

1845-51

Osborne on the Isle of Wight is built under Albert’s supervision as a holiday retreat for the royal family.



Osborne, the royals’ retreat on the Isle of Wight, shown in a colourised photograph from 1890

7 April

1853

Leopold (above) is born. Beatrice follows on 14 April 1857, completing the family.



1853-56

Balmoral Castle is built, once more under Albert’s supervision. Here the family enjoy a romantic mountain life which reminds Albert of his native Germany.

1857

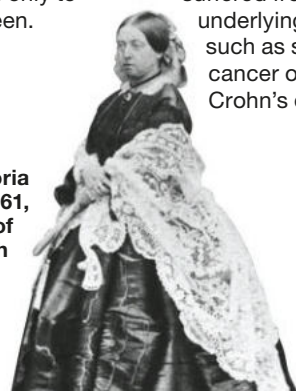
Victoria makes Albert Prince Consort. This gives him precedence over everyone, including his son the Prince of Wales, second only to the queen.

14 December

1861

Albert dies at Windsor, aged 42. The cause of death was allegedly typhoid fever, but modern historians speculate that he suffered from an underlying illness such as stomach cancer or Crohn’s disease.

Queen Victoria pictured in 1861, the year of Albert’s death



Victoria and Albert

“His way of giving orders and reproofs was rather too like a master of a house scolding servants to be pleasant for those who were bound to listen in silence,” wrote Mary Buteel. People noticed that the prince made not a single friend among ministers or the household. Such reserve in so young a man was “unpleasant”, thought Mary: “It implied something of the cold egotism which seems to chill you in all royalties.”

Memoirs of ladies-in-waiting concur that Albert was “detested” because he was “so stiff”, especially with women. Victoria, on the other hand, was adored because of her disarming frankness and her unquenchable curiosity and interest in the affairs of everyone around her.

Albert’s cold manner derived in part from his upbringing at the small German court of Coburg. When Mary Buteel visited Coburg in 1860, she found the court far stiffer than in Britain, and the equerries and household much more “collapsed before these little sovereigns than we are before the queen”.

One result of withdrawing from the court was that the royal couple were closer to their ordinary servants than they were to the aristocratic courtiers of the household. This is perhaps why, after Albert’s death, Victoria became intimate first with her Highland servant John Brown, and later with her Indian servant Abdul Karim – relationships that the courtiers found especially upsetting because they overturned the protocol of the court.

Hysterical tantrums

Behind the closed doors of the private apartments, Victoria was often irritable and moody. She bitterly resented what she called “the shadow side of marriage”, meaning pregnancy and childbirth, and she suffered from postnatal depression. She disliked babies, who she thought were “mere little plants for the first six months” and “frightful when undressed” with their “big body and little limbs and that terrible frog-like action”.

Victoria’s ‘nerves’ became worse during the 1850s. Her last two pregnancies were marked by hysterical scenes. Albert was advised by the royal doctors that the queen’s mood swings and violent Hanoverian tempers were symptoms that she had inherited the madness of her grandfather George III. Rather than engage, he walked away and, as his wife stormed out of the room in a fury, the prince composed letters reprimanding her for unreasonable behaviour. “If you are violent I have no other choice but to leave you... and retire to my room in order to give you time to recover yourself, then you follow me to renew the dispute and have it all out,” he wrote.

Effigies of Victoria and Albert at the mausoleum that Victoria commissioned at Frogmore, near Windsor, after Albert’s death. This was integral to the carefully crafted image of a perfect union



Victoria kept a notebook in which she recorded her tempers, her selfishness, and her loss of self-control. Albert would read her confessions and issue her with a ‘certificate’ of improvement, reviewing her behaviour as he might a child. Albert’s intentions were no doubt good. He was certainly a loyal and faithful husband. Victoria’s adoration of her beloved was undimmed. But she was made to feel that she was inadequate, his intellectual and moral inferior. “I owe everything to dearest papa,” she told her daughter. “He was my father, my protector, my guide and adviser in all and everything, my mother (I might almost say) as well as my husband.”

This was not a marriage of equals. It was as if the only way the couple could live with the

anomaly (as they saw it) of Victoria being a woman on the throne and superior in rank to her husband was by making her feel that she was Albert’s inferior in every other respect. This artifice imposed unbearable stresses upon them both. Little wonder Victoria lost her temper now and then.

Albert’s reaction was to escape into work. In the 1850s he consistently rose early in the morning to deal with his growing amount of paperwork. His meddling in politics made him unpopular in the country, and he became a lonely, unhappy figure. Photographs show him prematurely aged, balding and careworn. Queen Victoria’s tragedy was that Albert’s death, aged 42, meant that these tensions were never resolved. **H**

Jane Ridley is professor of history at the University of Buckingham and author of several works on the Victorian era

Albert would read Victoria’s confessions and issue her with a ‘certificate’ of improvement, reviewing her behaviour as he might a child

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

► **Victoria (Penguin Monarchs): Queen, Matriarch, Empress** by Jane Ridley (Allen Lane, 2015)

TELEVISION

► The **ITV drama Victoria** is due to return for a second series in the autumn

ON THE PODCAST

Jane Ridley explores **Victoria and Albert’s retreat, Osborne**, on our podcast
► historyextra.com/podcasts

The best of enemies

Histories of Anglo-French relations in the 18th and 19th centuries are usually dominated by conflict. But, say **Renaud Morieux** and **Fabrice Bensimon**, the two peoples had more in common than the bloodletting of the Napoleonic Wars would suggest

INTERVIEW BY ELLIE CAWTHORNE



Prime Minister Henry Addington and Napoleon draw swords in James Gillray's 1803 print *Armed Heroes*. These two men's antipathy wasn't always shared by the wider population

Are we too fixated on the idea that the French and the British were permanently at each other's throats in the 18th and 19th centuries?

Fabrice Bensimon: War *did* play a crucial role in France and Britain's relationship. But it's important not to forget all the other types of interaction between the nations, such as migration, trade, intellectual exchanges and the circulation of political ideas.

Renaud Morieux: Although war may have set Britain and France at odds with one another across the two centuries, at the same time it was also a productive means of cultural exchange. There are plenty of examples of prisoners of war engaging peacefully with their 'enemies', including lots of stories of French soldiers in England marrying English women, and the reverse happening across the Channel.

So French and British people wouldn't have just encountered each other on the battlefield?

FB: They'd have worked together in all kinds of ways – and the port of Calais is a good example of how they did so. Today, Calais is a site of great tension, based around the fact that some migrants see it as a potential place of entry into Britain. In the 19th century, things were very different. Calais was a place of entry, but into France for British workers, aristocrats and members of the middle class.

The town also had a strong community of lace workers from Nottinghamshire. Thousands of them settled there to avoid paying duties (or smuggling costs) to sell their goods on the French market. As a result, a significant proportion of Calais' population was British.

British migrants were key to France's industrial evolution in the 18th and 19th

centuries. Although their role is seldom acknowledged in France's grand national narratives, they had a significant impact on the development of the country.

RM: As well as long-term migrants, a lot of people regularly travelled back and forth between the two countries. Many were crossing the Channel daily, such as fishermen, or packet boat operators transporting mail, horses and travellers. After studying official trade statistics, many historians have concluded that France and Britain were not major trading partners in this period. But if you look at all the illegal smuggling that was taking place under the radar, then you discover a whole range of exchanges that were going on for centuries.

How did nationalism affect the two nations' relationship?

RM: For a lot of ordinary people in the 18th century, allegiance to your own country wasn't necessarily that important – the idea of nationalism arguably hadn't been invented yet. For many people at this time, what really mattered was not their 'nation' but their locality. The term 'foreigner' was commonly used to refer to someone who lived outside the parish, rather than in another country.

Whether people defined themselves as 'French' or 'English' depended on context. There were privateers from the Channel Islands who had family on both coasts and spoke both languages. They were very shrewd and able to play this dual nationality to their advantage. If they met an English warship, they would display an English licence, while if they came across a French customs and revenues ship they would quickly produce a French passport. So national identity wasn't necessarily a deeply felt sentiment.

Sometimes cross-national alliances proved more important. Fishermen from Dieppe were often at odds with their competitors from Dunkirk, so preferred to align themselves with those from Harwich or Dover. In petitions to the state they would downplay their nationality, emphasising their common interests with their friends across the Channel, and calling their fellow French subjects "pirates" or "worse than Turks".

FB: French and British workers were also some of the first to rally together across national borders. The International Workingmen's Association, founded in London in 1864, partly began as an association between French and British workers who wanted to organise together, above all, to prevent employers importing foreign workers to break strikes. They felt that their governments and employers were placing them in opposition to one another, while in reality they had shared interests.

Travellers arrive in Calais in 1816. At this time, a large proportion of the town's population was British, including many lace workers from Nottinghamshire



So French workers felt a degree of solidarity with their British counterparts. Was this sentiment shared by the elites?

RM: The elites of pre-Revolutionary France viewed Britain – and, in particular, England – as a riotous country which, sooner or later, would be consumed by revolution. They believed that the 1688 Glorious Revolution, in which James II (and VII) was deposed, had left England's institutions unstable. Eruptions of unrest and rioting over the following century supported this idea.

FB: This view of British instability continued well into the 19th century – and was, in the eyes of Britain's French critics, confirmed by the Swing Riots of 1830 [in response to land enclosure and the mechanisation of agricultural practices]; the Reform Act crisis [early 1830s], when attempts to suppress electoral reform triggered lethal riots; and the violent opposition to the introduction of the 1834 'New Poor Law' [widely associated with the emergence of the workhouse].

Around this time, the French historian and political writer Alexis de Tocqueville visited Britain and Ireland. In his diary of those travels, Tocqueville concluded that revolution was inevitable, as the country could no longer sustain such volatility.



French and British workers were among the first to campaign together for their rights across national borders



For a lot of British and French people in the 18th century, allegiance to your country wasn't that important

What's the value of studying Anglo-French history from the perspective of both nations, rather than one?

RM: Looking at a 'foreign' country alongside your own allows you to distance yourself from inherited national narratives, such as the idea that your nation's history is particularly unique. In Britain that would be the 'our island' story, while in France it's 'l'Hexagone', the notion that the French territory forms a perfect six-sided shape. I think that escaping these national narratives is a very healthy way of thinking. **FI**

Britain's French critics also used Ireland as an example of British disrespect for liberty. The Irish nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell was popular in 1830s and 1840s France, both with royalist Catholics and republicans, who saw him as opposing an oppressive state.

In fact, it wasn't until the 1850s, when Britain emerged relatively unscathed from the 1848 revolutions that swept many European nations, and was beginning to enjoy the fruits of the industrial revolution, that this view changed. But, even then, France didn't see Britain as a model of economic prosperity, but rather regarded the transformation of its towns, workers and factories as the vision of a dehumanising future.

And what was the British elite's view of France?

FB: Before the French Revolution, many people in the British establishment sought to define themselves against what they regarded as the nationalist, expansionist and absolutist instincts of the French system.

Following the Revolution, the British began to regard their neighbours across the Channel as the French viewed *them* – chaotic and volatile. By contrasting France's litany of regimes and revolutions with what they saw as their own more stable constitution, British

elites tried to argue that their system was superior. They offered France up as a model of what could go wrong when the establishment ceded ground to those demanding reform – whether they were democrats, Chartists or, later, socialists.

What part did the Channel play in Anglo-French relations during the 18th and 19th centuries?

RM: From at least as far back as the 17th century, there has been a notion in Britain that the water itself belongs to the British domain. Hence the British call it the 'English Channel'. For a time, the French monarchy contested this idea, and Louis XIV even referred to it as 'La Manche de France'. Yet during the 18th century, French claims on the Channel disappeared. Both states implicitly agreed that the border between England and France begins on the French coast.

From a British perspective, this was based on a number of arguments. One was that England was the sovereign of the seas. Another was that the Channel Islands were part of the duchy of Normandy and the Duke of Normandy was the king of England, making the Channel simply an English river between English possessions.



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DISCOVER MORE

EVENT

► Renaud Morieux and Fabrice Bensimon were speaking to Ellie Cawthorne at the 2017 **York Festival of Ideas**, in collaboration with the Institut Français. For more on this event, go to yorkfestivalofideas.com

ON THE PODCAST

► Listen out for the full interview in our podcast: historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/podcasts

SECOND WORLD WAR

A nerveless Nazi-killer

As part of our occasional series profiling remarkable yet unheralded characters from history, **Gavin Mortimer** introduces Johnny Hopper, the British lone-wolf fighter who embarked on a campaign of violence that made him one of the most wanted men in Nazi-occupied France

ILLUSTRATION BY STAVROS DAMOS

Johnny Hopper and his wife, Paulette, arrived at the cafe on the rue Beaubourg on schedule. They chose a table at the end of the long narrow cafe, their backs to the wall and with an unobstructed view of the entrance.

It was Paris, 8 May 1942, a dangerous place to be for an Englishman who was the subject of a nationwide manhunt having slain two policemen the previous year in Caen.

Hopper ordered two coffees and waited for the arrival of a doctor, a member of the Resistance. He claimed he had information about Paul Cole, a former British soldier who had been captured in 1941 and turned by the Gestapo into one of their agents.

The doctor arrived on time and Hopper rose to greet him. But as he advanced he noticed another man coming into the cafe. Then two soldiers came into view on the street outside. Hopper reached for the pistol in his pocket; at the same time the man accompanying the doctor went for his weapon. Within seconds, shots were being exchanged across the cafe as terrified customers dived for cover. Hopper felt a blow to his arm. "I didn't know at first how badly I was wounded," he recalled. "I ducked back through a door next to our table, to take stock and to get a fresh gun unstrapped from my leg. It was only a sort of closet back there, but the Germans must have assumed it was a rear door to the alley. I had hit all of them more or less badly, and when I kicked my door open, they were all running out the front door to get help."

Hopper glanced round the cafe. Everyone was still hiding under their tables. Everyone except his wife. She was slumped in her seat, blood flowing from her mouth. They had been married three years, had a young son and were deeply in love. Hopper examined

her wound. It was almost certainly fatal, yet he couldn't bear to think of her in the hands of the Gestapo. He placed his pistol to her temple and fired. "I have relived that moment every day of my life," he said 48 years later. "Always asking myself the same question."

Never give up

Ian Kenneth 'Johnny' Hopper's remarkable life began on 25 May 1912. Born in King's Lynn, his parents moved to Normandy when he was 12 and settled in the village of Varaville. He struggled at school and recalled the only worthwhile education he received as a child came from the local priest, who instilled in him two philosophies to take through life: never complain and never give up.

When war broke out, Hopper neither returned to England nor enlisted in the French army. But when Germany marched into France, some martial spirit within him stirred. Assembling a dozen local men, Hopper began to carry out acts of resistance against the invader. They were small at first – like laying a wreath on 11 November 1940 at the Caen war memorial, to stealing wheels off German motorbikes – but soon Hopper and his men had become an irritant. Several were arrested and deported to Germany, but Hopper remained at large, more determined than ever to strike at the enemy.

A week into August 1941 and the Englishman was one of the most wanted men in France, described by newspapers as the "Bandit Hopper" with a price of 5,000 francs on his head. His first crime was to gun down Edouard Bénard, deputy police chief of Caen, on 27 July 1941. "He had stopped my car and ordered me to drive him to police headquarters," recalled Hopper. "When he saw that I was heading for open country, he pulled out his gun. I was quicker. I shot him

in the head. I dropped him off at a hospital with a word of advice about keeping his mouth shut." Hopper did indeed deposit the dying Bénard at a hospital, but only after shooting him again in the stomach.

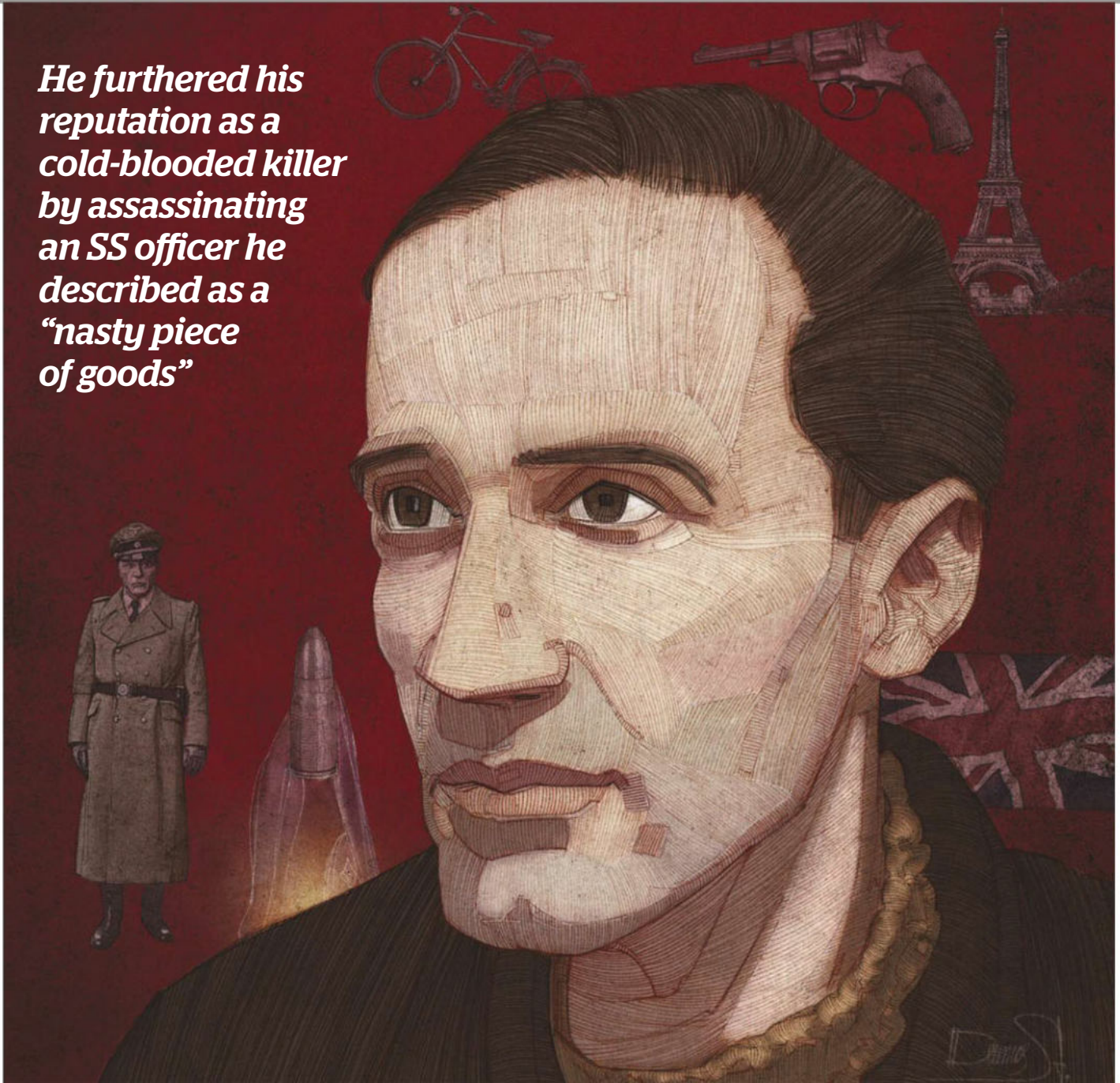
Four days later, Hopper was approaching his lock-up garage when he became aware he was being followed. Hearing the click of a weapon being cocked, he spun round, whipping the two pistols from his pockets, and opening fire. The man he shot dead was Bénard's superior, Adolphe Morin, and although Hopper escaped on a bicycle from a hail of bullets, he left behind his identity card, providing police with his name and photograph. A description circulated nationwide of a man of "athletic physique, long face and extremely pale".

Acts of arson

By now, the local press were labelling Hopper "a dangerous criminal". One paper, *Journal de Normandie*, furnished its readers with an account of his activities, pieced together by the police after a search of his property. Not only did they hold him responsible for several acts of arson against government buildings, but in his garage were 10,000 kilos of sugar and 250,000 francs' worth of clothing. In addition, police believed he had been collecting information on German military installations and transmitting it to London.

Hopper and Paulette lived rough in the forest for a fortnight, eventually joining the growing Resistance network in Paris. He furthered his reputation as a cold-blooded killer by assassinating an SS officer he described as a "nasty piece of goods", but also lived up to his reputation as a bandit, robbing a Normandy bank of nearly two million francs, money that was used by the Resistance to buy arms and equipment.

He furthered his reputation as a cold-blooded killer by assassinating an SS officer he described as a “nasty piece of goods”



Hopper's freedom came to an end on 25 July 1942, when he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon during a routine stop-and-search at a metro station. Taken to Gestapo headquarters at Rue des Saussaies, Hopper spent eight months in their hands, although curiously he avoided execution. Instead he was transported to Mauthausen concentration camp, and then to Dachau, from where he was liberated by the Americans in April 1945.

Hopper settled in East Anglia after the war, remarrying and becoming a mushroom

farmer. He granted few interviews about his wartime exploits, though in 1991, the year of his death, he told a journalist that “you don't need technique, you need nerve”.

Nonetheless, the question remains: was Hopper a freedom fighter or a common criminal? Undoubtedly some of his acts were for personal gain but he also exhibited defiance at a time when few in France dared stand up to their conqueror. The contemporary French press described him as a bandit; he called himself a Resistance fighter. The truth probably lies somewhere in

between. Asked why he did what he did, Hopper replied: “I don't believe in taking things lying down.” **H**

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Gavin Mortimer is a military historian. His latest book is *The Long Range Desert Group in World War II* (Osprey, 2017)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

► **A Thorn in the Side: Story of Johnny Hopper** by Bill Knapp (Carbon-Based Books, 2007)

COVER STORY

THE LOST BATTLES OF **VIKING BRITAIN**

From Anglo-Saxons slaughtered by Vikings in East Anglia to the Norse king ambushed and slain in the Pennines, Britain's Viking age saw bloodletting on a huge scale.

Thomas Williams introduces five forgotten battles that helped shape a nation's destiny



Heading for conquest

A late 10th-century Viking helmet, made from iron, found in 1943 in a burial mound near Gjermundbu, Norway. In the background is Stainmore, where Eric Bloodaxe's death brought an end to independent Viking rule in Northumbria

The Viking age gave us some of the most iconic battles in British history. There was Edington, Alfred the Great's against-the-odds triumph in AD 878 over part of a massive Danish invasion force; Brunanburh (AD 937) in which Alfred's grandson Æthelstan stamped his authority on the British Isles; and Stamford Bridge (1066), where the bones of Harald Hardrada's Viking army were left to whiten on the field, picked clean by carrion birds.

But the Viking age lasted for

almost three centuries: from the end of the eighth until deep into the 11th. Over this period, in England alone, sources document at least 50 pitched battles, plus as many raids, sieges and naval encounters. Most of these have been all but forgotten over the centuries.

Many of them, however, played a critical role in shaping the nascent kingdoms of England and Scotland. Here, then, are five battles of the Viking age: clashes that – though uncelebrated and often unremembered – helped to shape the destiny of Britain.

The crushing of the Cornish

The battle of Hengest's Hill AD 838

COMBATANTS: A Cornish-Viking alliance against Egbert's kingdom of Wessex

OUTCOME: Victory for Wessex

King Egbert of Wessex was not a man to be trifled with. In AD 825, he established himself and his kingdom as the pre-eminent power in Britain, crushing the Mercians at a place called Ellendun, just outside Swindon. It was a memorably bloody business. A fragment of poetry recalled that "Ellendun's stream ran red with blood, was stuffed up with corpses, filled with stink".

This was only one front in Egbert's campaign to subdue the other kingdoms of Britain. In AD 815, he had raided Cornwall "from east to west" – a reminder to the still independent Cornish kingdom of the limits of their autonomy. In AD 838, however, the Cornish decided that the time had come to push back against West Saxon domination. This time they had allies – Viking allies.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that, in AD 838, a "great ship-horde

came to Cornwall", which combined forces with the native Cornish and immediately set about challenging King Egbert's power. Egbert led an army into Cornwall, bringing his strength to bear at a place called Hengest's Hill. This was most probably Kit Hill, the massive prominence that dominates the valley of the Tamar, one flank of which is still known as Hingsdon.

We know very little about what happened, except that the Vikings and the Cornish were put to flight. This was to be the last gasp of Cornish independence. The people of Britain's south-western peninsula would never again pose a military threat to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The same cannot be said of their erstwhile Viking allies.

Since the AD 790s, Viking fleets had been striking from the sea without warning, raiding monasteries and coastal settlements and capturing slaves and treasure. By the AD 830s, these attacks had become increasingly brazen, targeting substantial settlements like Carhampton in Somerset and defeating Anglo-Saxon armies. But this was the first time (that we know of) that Vikings had marched to war alongside a native people in Britain. Although (and sadly for the Cornish) it was not a successful experiment, it would certainly not be the last.



Ravens and ramparts

The battle of Cynwit AD 878

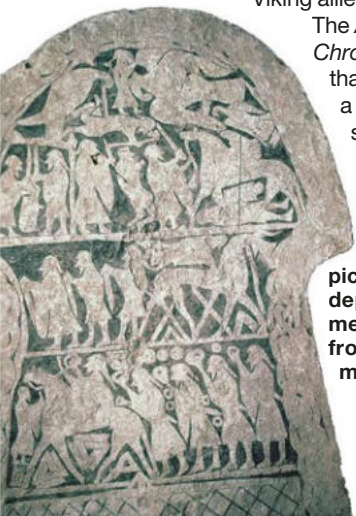
COMBATANTS: Odda and the men of Devon against the Vikings

OUTCOME: Victory for Wessex

In AD 878, things were looking grim for Egbert's grandson, King Alfred. A Viking army, led by the warlord Guthrum, had burst into Wessex, occupying Chippenham and driving Alfred into exile in his own kingdom.

For several months the king was on the run, living as a fugitive in the marshes and wild places. Eventually he set up camp on the Isle of Athelney in Somerset, from where he orchestrated guerrilla raids on the Viking occupiers. When, however, another Viking army, led by the warrior Ubbe, arrived in the south-west of England, it must have seemed likely that the days of the West Saxon dynasty were numbered in double-digits.

Ubbe's army was met by forces commanded by Odda, the ealdorman of Devon. The battle that followed, one of the great military reversals of the early Middle Ages, was fought at an unidentified hillfort in the south-west of England called 'Cynwit'.



A Viking picture stone depicting armed men and scenes from Norse mythology



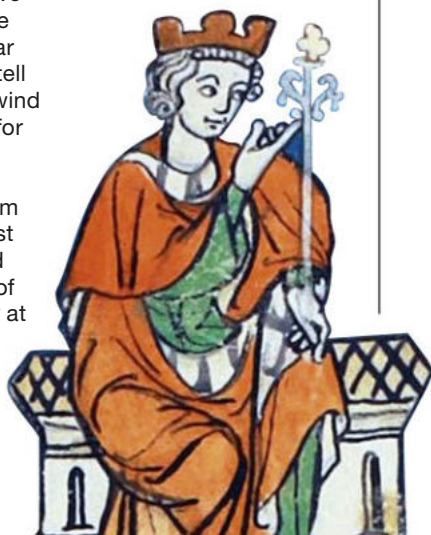
King Alfred's biographer, Bishop Asser of Sherborne, explained how the West Saxons, having retreated within the earthen ramparts of the fortress, found themselves trapped inside by the Viking army without food or water. But, as Asser tells it, rather than allow themselves to become enfeebled by a siege, the West Saxons chose to seek victory or a glorious death. At dawn, they hurled themselves down the slopes towards their erstwhile besiegers, overwhelming them with their ferocity and driving the survivors to their ships. Perhaps 1,200 Viking warriors, including Ubbe, were slain.

Defeat for the Vikings was made worse for them by the capture of their raven banner – a magical talisman (said to have been woven by Ubbe's three sisters, the daughters of the semi-legendary Ragnar 'Hairy-pants') that was believed to foretell victory if the raven's wings caught the wind before battle. Its loss was a bad omen for the Vikings in Wessex.

Alfred would go on to win a famous victory over the Viking forces of Guthrum at Edington in Wiltshire, setting the West Saxon royal house on a path that would lead to the throne of a united kingdom of England. Had it not been for the victory at Cynwit, Alfred – caught between Ubbe and Guthrum – might have met a very different fate indeed.

A legendary Viking warrior depicted in the carved portal of the late 12th-century Hylestad stave church, Norway

A medieval depiction of King Alfred, who led guerrilla raids against the Viking invaders



Æthelwold perishes in the fens

The battle of the Holme AD 902

COMBATANTS: King Edward against his rebel cousin and the Vikings

OUTCOME: (Sort of) Viking victory

Violence between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings didn't end with Alfred's death in AD 899. In fact, no sooner had Alfred's son, Edward, taken his seat on the throne than he was facing a military crisis. Alfred's nephew, Æthelwold – feeling that he had been unfairly passed over – rebelled against his cousin Edward before fleeing to the parts of England under Viking control (swathes of the north and east of the country sometimes referred to as 'the Danelaw'). There he was apparently welcomed with open arms and acclaimed as "king of the pagans; king of the Danes".

Æthelwold began his campaign in the summer of AD 902, bringing an army out of Viking East Anglia and harrying throughout southern England as far as Cricklade and Braydon in Wessex. This was a provocation, and Edward (known later as 'the Elder') wasted little time in assembling an army to pursue his cousin back into the bleak and unforgiving fens of East Anglia.

The battle that followed was fought in a place known as the Holme ('island') and was a catastrophe for almost everyone concerned. Edward, perhaps realising the difficulties of the terrain, ordered a retreat, but the Kentish contingent refused the summons. In mounting panic, Edward dispatched rider after rider (seven in total) to order his men to fall back. For reasons we will never know, they failed to withdraw.

The only description we have of the fighting proclaims grandly that the belligerents "clashed shields, wielded swords, and shook greatly the spear in either hand". But to fight in the sucking peat marshes of the fens would have been to live through a waking nightmare. When the men of Kent broke and ran, throwing aside shields and weapons in their desperation, they would have slipped and fallen, trampled in the clawing fens, drowning in mud and brackish bog-water, floundering through the reed-beds into disaster. And, for the men of Kent, disaster it assuredly was: the Kentish ealdorman Sigewulf, and his kinsman Sigeheilm, and almost all of the Kentish lords were slain. For King Edward, however, there was a silver lining: Æthelwold, the pretender, was dead.

Who can say what the future might have held in store for Æthelwold had he emerged from Holme victorious. Instead, a serious challenge to Edward's authority and legitimacy had been removed, and it would be he – Edward – who in the subsequent decades would go on the offensive, conquering all of Viking-held England south of the Humber.

They would have fallen, trampled in the clawing fens, drowning in mud and brackish bog-water

Bloodaxe's final stand

The battle of Stainmore AD 954

COMBATANTS: Eric Bloodaxe and King Eadred of Wessex

OUTCOME: Northumbria loses its independence

The battle of Stainmore might not have been a battle at all, but it was remembered as one by those who came after – the last breath of independence of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria.

Northumbria had been under Viking domination since AD 866 when the city of York was captured by the Viking *micel here* ('great horde'). Over the following nine decades, Scandinavian culture had seeped into many aspects of life in England's most northerly realm, changing habits of language, dress, belief and identity. But the Northumbrians remained a proud people with a long and distinguished history and, if pushed, they preferred a foreign Viking king to the heavy hand of the West Saxon dynasty. And in the mid-10th century this was precisely what they ended up with when the former king of Norway, Eric Bloodaxe, occupied the Northumbrian throne.

King Eric was not a good man. He had earned his nickname by killing off most of his own brothers to become king of Norway, and he was so brutal and unpopular as king that he was swiftly kicked out by his surviving brother, Haakon 'Athelstan's-foster-son' (a man who, as his nickname suggests, grew up in the English court of King Æthelstan, Edward the Elder's son). Eric fled to England and, though we don't know how he managed it (bloody axes may well have been involved), convinced the Northumbrians to adopt him as their king. He proved just as unsuccessful in Northumbria as he had been in Norway, getting kicked out in AD 948 for upsetting King Eadred of Wessex (by slaughtering a West Saxon army at Castleford).

In AD 952 Eric was invited back by the Northumbrians when Eadred wasn't looking, but in AD 954 he was shown the door for a second time. He travelled west over the Pennines, taking the Stainmore pass through the hills towards Cumbria – striking, perhaps, for the Irish Sea. He never arrived. According to English sources, Eric died a squalid death on the road, "treacherously killed by Earl Maccus".

But Scandinavian sources tell a different story: that Eric met his foes at the head of an outnumbered army and there on the high, wind-scoured pass, he died the glorious death of the archetypal Viking warlord. A poem commis-

sioned by his wife pictured Eric arriving at Valhalla, welcomed by Valkyries, to feast and fight by Odin's side until the breaking of the world: a fitting epitaph for the last king of an independent Northumbria.



A coin inscribed 'Eric Rex'. The sword hints at the violence of King Eric Bloodaxe's reign



Stainmore Gap, where Eric Bloodaxe – accepted twice by the Northumbrians as their king – met his death



ABOVE: A rune stone from Gotland, Sweden depicting the journey of dead Viking warriors into the afterlife

BELOW: Edmund Ironside fought seven battles against the Danes before agreeing to divide England with Cnut Sveinsson



TOP PHOTO/ALAMY/AGK IMAGES/ TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Carnage in the shadow of the forest

The battle of Dane's Wood 1016

COMBATANTS: Cnut Sveinsson and Edmund Ironside

OUTCOME: Cnut and Edmund make peace

The year 1016 was a bloody one. It saw the Anglo-Saxon king Edmund 'Ironside' taking up the sword wielded so ineffectively by his father, Æthelred the Unready, and standing resolute against the challenge posed by the Danish prince, Cnut Sveinsson. Edmund and Cnut met in battle no fewer than seven times that year – six of these clashes are well known, but the final one was almost lost to history.

Cnut's father, Svein Forkbeard, had briefly made himself king of England in the winter of 1013/14. Svein had died suddenly – slain, so it was said, by the murderous ghost of St Edmund, the king of East Anglia martyred by the Vikings in AD 869 – and the English crown had reverted to the West Saxon dynasty. Cnut, however, was not a man to drop a claim to power lightly.

In 1016, Cnut and Edmund fought major battles at Penselwood (Somerset), Sherston (Wiltshire), London, Brentford (Middlesex) and Otford (Kent). Edmund prevailed against the Danish challenger in all of these struggles (apart from Sherston, which had ended in stalemate), and it must have seemed that Cnut's campaign was on the brink of sputtering out.

But at Assandun (probably Ashingdon in Essex), the Danish warlord brought his army to bear once more, and – thanks to the disloyalty of the perfidious West Saxon nobleman Eadric Streona (who fled at the beginning of hostilities) – Cnut pulled off a stunning victory. It was a calamity for the English. As the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reported it: "There Bishop Eadnoth was killed, and Abbot Wulfsize, and Ealdorman Ælfric, and Godwine the ealdorman of Lindsey, and Ulfcetel of East Anglia, and Æthelweard, son of Ealdorman Æthelwine, and all of the English nobility was destroyed there."

The battle of Assandun is generally assumed to have been the decisive moment of the war, and the event that paved the way for Cnut to eventually reclaim the throne prematurely vacated by his father. But Edmund was not yet dead, and there was to be one more battle before the English king would lay down his arms and come to terms. It is mentioned only in a single

Edmund was not yet dead, and there was to be one more battle before he would lay down his arms

stanza of poetry composed in praise of Cnut by the Viking *skald* Ottar the Black: "Prince, you won fame with the sword north of mighty Danaskógar, and it seemed a slaughter to your followers."

Danaskógar means 'forest of the Danes', and nowhere in England is known to ever have had such a name. However, it is known that Edmund had retreated with his army towards Gloucestershire, where – beyond the river Severn – the Forest of Dean might have provided arboreal refuge. It is possible that the Old Norse speakers of Cnut's army, pursuing Edmund's battered forces into these western woods, heard the word 'Dean' and interpreted it, not as Old English *denu* ('valley'), but as Old English *dēna*: 'of the Danes'. Retranslated into Old Norse, the Forest of Dean became the Forest of the Danes – a place won and renamed with the sword.

In the aftermath, Edmund and Cnut made peace. Within a few months, Edmund was dead and Cnut succeeded him as king of all England. **H**

Thomas Williams is curator of early medieval coins at the British Museum. His latest book, *Viking Britain: An Exploration*, is published by William Collins this month

DISCOVER MORE

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

► Read more about the bloodiest episodes of the Viking age in our collector's edition, **The Story of Vikings and Anglo-Saxons**. For more details, go to buysubscriptions.com



OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

Ypres: the battle above and below

In part 40 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** takes us back to September 1917, when scraps of territory continued to be won and lost on the western front. He is tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War - via interviews, letters and diary entries - as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON

British troops await an order to move forward during the battle of the Menin Road, 20 September 1917



James McCudden

James qualified as a pilot in April 1916 and shot down his first aircraft in September. By June of 1917 he had been made a captain. That year he was flying the Sopwith Pup Scout with 66 Squadron, before transferring to fly the SE5a Scout with 56 Squadron.

On the early evening of 23 September, 2nd Lieutenant McCudden led his SE5a Scouts on a patrol over the German lines. Suddenly he saw another SE5a being attacked by a Fokker triplane, which it later transpired was being flown by Lieutenant Werner Voss.

“Down we dived at a colossal speed. I went to the right, Rhys Davids to the left, and we got behind the triplane together. The German pilot saw us and turned in the most disconcertingly quick manner, not a climbing nor Immelmann turn, but a sort of flat half-spin. By now the German triplane was

in the middle of our formation, and its handling was wonderful to behold. The pilot seemed to be firing at all of us simultaneously, and although I got behind him a second time, I could hardly stay there for a second.

His movements were so quick and uncertain that none of us could hold him in sight. I now got a good opportunity as he was coming towards me nose-on, and slightly underneath, and had apparently not seen me. I dropped

“As soon as I fired, up came his nose at me, and I heard clack-clack-clack-clack as his bullets passed through my wings”

my nose, got him well in my sight, and pressed both triggers. As soon as I fired, up came his nose at me, and I heard clack-clack-clack-clack as his bullets passed close to me and through my wings. I distinctly noticed the red-yellow flashes from his parallel Spandau guns. As he flashed by me I caught a glimpse of a black head.

Voss had claimed 48 victories and was second only to Richthofen among the German aces. McCudden and the SE5s tried their best to shoot down their elusive opponent.

“At one time, I noted the triplane in the apex of a cone of tracer bullets from at least five machines simultaneously, and each machine had two

guns. By now the fighting was very low, and I had temporarily lost sight of the triplane while changing a drum of my Lewis gun. When I next saw him, he was very low.

Voss's accurate fire forced two SE5s to retire damaged. Perhaps Voss could have escaped, but he chose to fight on. At last, Lieutenant Arthur Rhys Davids managed to get on to the Fokker's tail. McCudden saw the end of their brave opponent.

“I noticed that the triplane's movements were very erratic, and then I saw him go into a fairly steep dive and so I continued to watch, and then saw the triplane hit the ground and disappear into a thousand fragments, for it seemed to me that it literally went to a powder.

Young Arthur Rhys Davids would be killed in action himself just four weeks after his triumph over Voss.



“We decided to let ourselves go and write the report in the style of one of Ashmead-Bartlett’s newspaper dispatches”



Thomas Louch

Thomas was born in Geraldton, Western Australia in 1894. He rose to the rank of platoon sergeant in the Australian Imperial Force before injury in the Gallipoli campaign. By 1917 he was serving with the Australian 13th Brigade during the third battle of Ypres.

In September, a new phase of the battle began: the British sought only to take the German frontline zone, eschewing thoughts of a breakthrough, and adopting ‘bite and hold’ tactics. The results were great successes at the battles of Menin Road on 20 September and Polygon Wood on the 26th. Thomas was on the staff of Brigadier General William Glasgow.

Glasgow to forward to divisional headquarters.

“Some time before, Glasgow had complained that the 13th Brigade was not getting its fair share of medals and decorations, and the reply was that perhaps the brigade ‘stories’ were not as well ‘written up’ as in other units. This time there was little for us to say as everything had gone to plan, but we decided to let ourselves go and write the report in the style of one of [war correspondent] Ashmead-Bartlett’s newspaper dispatches from Anzac. So the artillery “showered bouquets of shells” and the infantry “advanced through the spume and haze”. In our original draft, we had something about “the bronzed warriors from down under”, but we cut it out because we did not think the ‘Old Man’ would stand for that, and he had to sign the report! **H**”

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

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“We were getting battle-wiser every day. The preliminary reconnaissance was thorough and the troops were assembled in an area that we had found was not usually shelled. This was so successful that some officers complained that when the time came to move up on to the tape they had to go along waking all their men up.

There was a tremendous supporting barrage and the attack, so far as we were concerned, went exactly according to plan. The 4th Brigade was equally successful, but the 5th Division struck trouble at Polygon Wood before eventually making good their task. As assistant brigade major, I was like the fifth wheel of a coach, and only did odd jobs. Brigade headquarters was in a small pillbox on Westhoek Ridge, chock-a-block with brigade staff, signallers and liaison officers.

After the battle, the brigade staff had to ‘write up’ the medal recommendations in reports for Brigadier General

George Horridge



Born into a wealthy textile manufacturing family in Bury, Lancashire in 1894, George was commissioned as a territorial in the 1/5th Lancashire Fusiliers in 1913. After serving in Egypt and Turkey, in 1917 his regiment was dispatched to the western front.

Lieutenant Horridge was serving in the Ypres Salient in the first week of September. Every night, ration parties went back to supply dumps to collect food for the men at the front. The Germans knew exactly what routes they had to follow and shelled at random throughout the night.

“We were watching the rations being dumped. I happened to look up to the right and I could see shadowy forms coming. I said: “Hello, here’s the second ration party, I’ll just give them a shout, tell them where we are!” I took two steps – not more – and a big shell fell on the plate I’d been leaning against. A tremendous flash and I was blown down against the side of the trench. I picked myself up,

realising that, as far as I knew, nothing had hit me.

There was a dead silence. I said: “Are Mr Mast and Mr Hudson here?” They were the two officers who’d been with me – no reply. Then a sort of hubbub broke out. This shell had not only killed the two officers, it had killed four of the ration party, one of whom had both legs blown off, and wounded eight others. The whole thing was a terrible shock. We had to get the wounded away, in the dark, and we knew the gun was pointing at the same place and might fire another shot at any time. I think I had a certain amount of shell shock because when we got them away and everything had gone quiet, I found an old pillbox and lay down in a corner for 24 hours more or less.

Eustace the Monk (far right) has his head hacked off in 1217's battle of Sandwich, in an illustration from Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*. By the time of his death, Eustace was one of the most feared bandits in northern Europe



The devil's monk

He maimed, he murdered, he lied, he double-crossed. Eight centuries after Eustace the Monk died supporting a massive French invasion of England, **Sean McGlynn** profiles one of medieval Europe's unholyest holy men >



Eight hundred years ago, one of the most hated men in England met a grisly end. As the battle of Sandwich – fought off the Kent coast on 24 August 1217 between the English and French navies – reached its bloody conclusion, Eustace the Monk was on the deck of his ship, vigorously swinging an oar around him as he tried to fend off his English enemies. A contemporary writer describes how he “knocked down a good number... some had their arms broken, others their head smashed in... another had his collar bone shattered”. But Eustace’s luck was about to run out. Soon he was overwhelmed by his foes – and, after attempting to escape, he was dragged on deck and decapitated.

Eustace’s severed head was fixed on a spear and paraded around the southern ports of England to reassure their residents that this fearsome pirate was finally dead. The people celebrated his bloody demise long and lustily. But why? How had a former Benedictine monk become reviled for his lust for loot and violence? And what was a man who had once dedicated his life to the service of God doing throwing his weight behind a French invasion of England?

Eustace was born around 1170, son of Baudoin Busket, a lord of the county of Boulogne on the northern coast of France. Though Eustace started his early adult life as a knight, the call of the sea proved strong, and he soon mastered the skills of seaman-ship through extensive travels. According to *The Romance of Eustace the Monk* – a poem penned by an anonymous author who enthusiastically embellished fact with fiction – Eustace soon turned up at the Castilian city of Toledo. This was a notorious centre of black magic, where, we’re told, he learned the dark arts of necromancy in a cave. For the chroniclers, it was as if the devil himself had become Eustace’s mentor. But then something entirely unexpected happened: Eustace became a monk.

Farting, not fasting

We can’t be sure why Eustace chose to join the Benedictines at the monastery of St Samer near Boulogne. But one thing’s for sure: if ever anyone was ill-suited to the reflective life of this holy order, it was Eustace. No sooner had he joined the monastery than we’re told that he was performing “many devilish acts”. He encouraged the brothers to eat when they should have been fasting, curse “when they should have been reciting the office”, and he urged them to “fart in the cloister”. Unsurprisingly, it wasn’t long before he left



This medieval painting shows the Benedictine abbot Blessed Balsamus of Cava (left). His piety was far removed from Eustace’s antics: encouraging fellow monks to swear and break wind

Eustace learned the arts of necromancy in a cave. It was as if the devil himself had become his mentor

(or, more probably, was ejected from) the Benedictines. But from that moment on, his epithet was sealed: he would always be known as Eustace the Monk.

For all his capacity for mischief, Eustace clearly had some talent, for next he landed a job as seneschal (administrative officer) to the powerful Count of Boulogne, Renaud de Dammartin. But it seems that Eustace was soon up to his old tricks again as he was accused of financial impropriety. Fearing prison, Eustace fled and began a new career, this time as a bandit.

Taking to the forests around Boulogne, Eustace sustained himself through brigandage and a thirst for revenge against the count. Here the legend really takes off. Eustace and his men engaged in a series of outrageous escapades – robbery, lightning raids, dramatic escapes – as they pursued the former monk’s vendetta against the count.

There is very much a Robin Hood element to the tales told of Eustace, not least in the proliferation of disguises he employed. At one point in the *Romance*, he takes on the garb of

a leper with a clapper (bell) to trick Count Renaud into giving him money as charity. He also, we’re told, bound up one of his legs to play the part of a one-legged beggar, again deceiving the count into handing money over – before promptly jumping onto one of the count’s horses and riding off “with his crutch hanging down”.

On another occasion, Eustace dresses up as a woman and approaches one of the count’s young knights. “Let me get on this horse and I will give you a f***,” he says. The knight is keen to pay for the indecent proposal, so Eustace entices him further, declaring: “I will teach you how to use your bum.” As the man lifts Eustace’s leg, Eustace “let out a fart”. Needless to say, this story ends with Eustace stealing the knight’s horse.

But there’s a dark side to these humorous tales. When Eustace captures five of the count’s men-at-arms, he cuts off the feet of four of them, telling the fifth to convey a message to the count. The knight does so and, as the chronicle wryly tells us, does “not forget his trotters”. Blacker still is the episode in which Eustace seizes one of the count’s spies – a young boy – and forces him to hang himself without even the opportunity to make his confession.

England’s cunning ally

By now, Eustace’s cunning and cruelty had earned him quite a reputation in the environs of Boulogne. Soon he would be making waves on the other side of English Channel too. For, by early 1206, he had started working for King John of England.

Eustace picked an opportune moment to ally himself with the English king, for John was in the middle of a bitter struggle to wrest the duchy of Normandy back from the French. By supporting John’s campaign, Eustace would propel himself from the forests of northern France onto the international arena.

John no doubt recognised Eustace’s maritime ability and, seeing the potential for a pirate to inflict havoc on French shipping in the Channel, gave him command of, according to one source, 30 galleys.

It wasn’t long before Eustace was using these vessels to devastating effect. His force of English, Flemish and French sailors seized Sark, one of the Channel Islands, and set up a pirate base, from where they launched a series of raids against the French seaports.

At first it seems that John and Eustace got on famously. Not only did the king grant Eustace land in Norfolk (and possibly a palace in London), he also turned a blind eye to the monk’s side-line in private profiteering. Eustace’s pirates terrorised ships of all

nations in the Channel – and that included English ones. In doing so, he earned himself a notorious reputation in the ports and towns on England's south coast – so much so that, if he wanted to land in England (to conduct business, or to visit his wife and daughter), he first had to gain a safe-conduct pass to do so.

But soon Eustace would be looking for new employment once again, because sometime between 1212 and 1214, he and John fell out. There are a number of potential reasons why their relationship hit the rocks. Money was possibly a factor. The chronicler known as the Anonymous of Béthune relates that, when Eustace failed to repay a debt of 20 marks to John, he and his wife were imprisoned. According to the *Romance*, the king had Eustace's daughter, at the time John's hostage, "burned, disfigured" and "killed".

John's perennial mistrust of those whom he deemed to have grown too powerful may also have contributed to the dispute. Perhaps the king was fearful of Eustace's semi-independent position in the Channel Islands, and distrustful of his intentions. This would explain the king's decision to order a naval assault on Sark, in which many of Eustace's men were taken prisoner.

But the principal bone of contention between king and monk was probably Eustace's old enemy Count Renaud of Boulogne. In 1212, the count decided to switch sides in the Anglo-French war and throw his support behind John. It appears that John welcomed him with open arms. Renaud's lands were a huge boon to the king – assets well worth putting Eustace's nose out of joint for.

Whatever the reason for John and Eustace's contretemps, by early 1215 the ever-opportunistic Eustace had switched sides in the war and presented himself to the French court. Just as John had once been quick to realise the potential in employing Eustace's talents against the French, so the French king, Philip Augustus, was keen to make use of Eustace's knowledge of the Channel and his inside information on English military organisation. The *Romance* reports the first meeting between the two men: "You are not big, but small, yet you are so brave and bold," Philip reportedly told his slippery new ally. "You know a great deal about guile and cunning and do not need a cat's grease to help you."

Eustace was appointed Philip's admiral for the Channel, and now – with the war against



The seal of French king Philip Augustus, who was all too happy to employ Eustace's guile against King John of England

England entering a dramatic new phase – embarked upon the most intense and spectacular military chapter of his career. In May 1216, Prince Louis, heir to the Capetian throne in France, invaded England, quickly seizing half the country and receiving the homage of up to two-thirds of England's barons.

Eustace played a major role in the French invasion, ferrying troops and supplies across the Channel. In the spring of 1217, he was to prove his worth to the French campaign once more, dramatically breaking through an English blockade of the coastal town of Rye and rescuing Louis, who was trapped there.

Caught at sea

A few months later, Louis needed Eustace's help once again. Having suffered a defeat at the battle of Lincoln in May 1217, the French prince found himself holed up in London, desperately needing the monk to provide the supplies and reinforcements he required to continue waging his campaign. Eustace set sail for England in August but, on the 24th, his fleet was intercepted and annihilated by the English at Sandwich – a defeat that would ultimately force Louis to return to France with his tail between his legs (for more on the battle, see our box, right).

According to the chronicler Roger of Wendover, when Eustace faced his end on the deck of his flagship, the last words he heard were: "Never again in this world, wicked traitor, shall you deceive anyone with your false promises."

It was a fittingly bloody end to a violent life. Although the *Romance* focuses on his escapades as an outlaw, it was in his role as a pirate and an admiral that Eustace made his most telling impact on 13th-century Europe. It was certainly not in his role as a monk. **H**

Dr Sean McGlynn is lecturer in history at Plymouth University. His next book is *Medieval Generals* (Pen and Sword) and he is planning a book on Eustace

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- **Two Medieval Outlaws**, edited and translated by Glynn S Burgess (Boydell, 1997)
- **Blood Cries Afar: The Magna Carta War and the Invasion of England, 1215–1217** by Sean McGlynn (History Press, 2015)

Why Sandwich puts Trafalgar in the shade

The naval battle in which Eustace lost his life was the most important in English history, writes Sean McGlynn

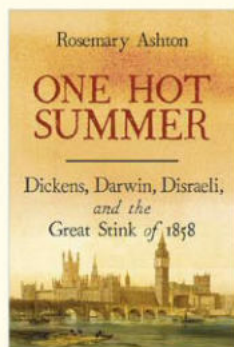


Never heard of the battle of Sandwich? If so, you're not alone. Set alongside Nelson's victory at Trafalgar and the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the clash off the Kent coast in 1217 barely makes a ripple on the British historical consciousness.

Despite this, Sandwich was an example of a navy at the top of its game. The contemporary chronicler Roger of Wendover was right to say that "the English were skilled in naval warfare" and that they "had a superior navy to the French". In the engagement, about 40 English ships took on 80 French ones. But – with lighter attack ships pitted against a French fleet that comprised heavy transport vessels, laden with supplies of horses, men, treasure and even a trebuchet – they were able to overcome this numerical disadvantage.

The English positioned themselves upwind of the French and launched pots of quicklime on to their decks. The powder blew into the eyes of the enemy, "which blinded them totally", writes the Anonymous of Béthune. This enabled the English to board the French ships and inflict a terrible slaughter.

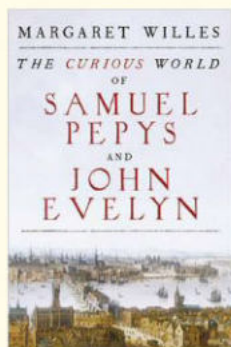
This naval victory was enormously important; more so, I would argue, than Trafalgar and the Armada. The latter two were fought to prevent an invasion, while the triumph at Sandwich prevented reinforcements reaching a French army that had been in England for 15 months and which was secure within the walls of London. Had those reinforcements got through, French prince Louis would have been able to continue the war in England in pursuit of his aim to become king. The defeat at Sandwich forced him to sue for peace and to abandon his ambitions.



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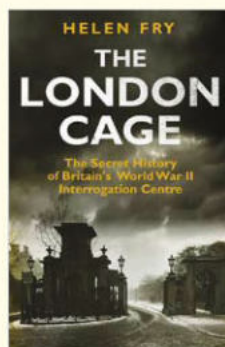
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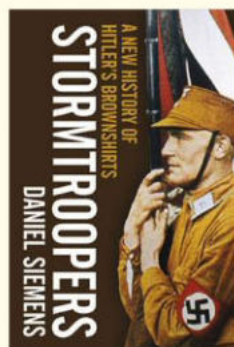
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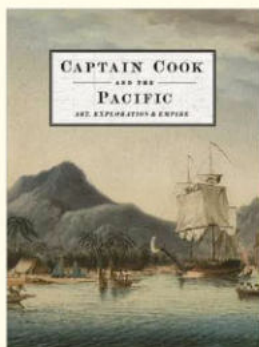
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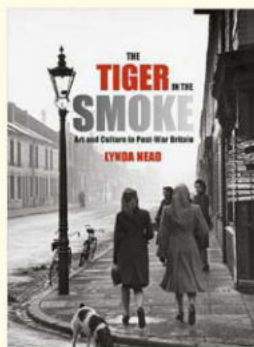
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It was written in the stars

With a total solar eclipse set to cross American skies, **Guy de la Bédoyère** describes seven celestial events that may have changed the course of history, from the comet that carried William the Conqueror to victory in 1066 to the eclipse that helped Lawrence of Arabia defeat the Ottomans

1 A match made in heaven

How a solar eclipse of 585 BC persuaded two belligerent kingdoms to make love not war

For the first known example of a celestial event changing the course of history, we must head to the sixth century BC when King Cyaxares, ruler of an ancient Iranian people known as the Medes, allowed nomad Scythians to settle in his kingdom. In return for Cyaxares' hospitality, the Scythians trained Median boys in archery. But then the relationship turned sour.

One day Cyaxares hurled abuse at the Scythians for going out hunting and coming home with nothing. In revenge the Scythians killed one of their trainees, chopped him up, cooked him and fed the meat to Cyaxares, pretending it was one of their hunting kills. Before Cyaxares got wind of their ruse, the Scythians had fled to the court of King Alyattes of Lydia at Sardis (western Turkey).

Unsurprisingly Cyaxares was enraged by the Scythians' antics, but Alyattes refused to send his visitors back. War raged between Lydia and Media for the next six years, with neither side able to gain the upper hand. Finally, during one battle, so the Greek historian Herodotus tells us, "day was suddenly turned into night". So horrified by this were the combatants, they gave up the fight and settled for peace, which was guaranteed by Alyattes' daughter marrying Cyaxares' son.

Remarkably, Herodotus reports that Thales of Miletus had predicted the event, which we now know took place on 28 May 585 BC – the first recorded prediction of a solar eclipse. The eclipse passed right through southern Europe and across modern Turkey into Iraq.

2 Fear of the dark

A Persian army made hay when the sun vanished in 557 BC

A mere 28 years after an eclipse brought an end to the Lydia–Media war, the course of ancient history was once again shaped by a celestial phenomenon.

Our source for this is Xenophon, a Greek philosopher-historian, who in 401 BC accompanied the army of Cyrus the Younger on an expedition to take the Persian throne from his brother Artaxerxes. En route they came across a deserted city called Larissa on the banks of the river Tigris, somewhere in modern Iraq.

Xenophon explains that Larissa had once been a well-fortified stronghold, its 100ft-high clay brick walls sitting on a 20ft-stone base with a six-mile perimeter. It had certainly proved too formidable for a Persian army 200 years earlier. Back then the Persians had repeatedly tried – and failed – to break the Larissans' resistance. But then the heavens had intervened. Xenophon reports that "a cloud covered up the sun and hid it from sight". This had so unsettled the Larissans that they promptly abandoned their city, some taking refuge on a pyramid nearby, and leaving Larissa defenceless before the Persians.

The track of the total eclipse of 19 May 557 BC passed right through southern Syria and Iraq. This must have been the event that so spooked the Larissans that they were prepared to give up a city that had for so long stood fast against their enemies.



3 The gospel truth?

An eclipse may offer us a clue as to the date of Jesus's death

One of the most important events in Christian tradition is the crucifixion of Jesus. But the New Testament is frustratingly short on historical detail. The crucifixion took place during the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius (AD 14–37). But when exactly?

The Gospel of St Luke tells us that John the Baptist began his teaching in the 15th year of Tiberius, which must be c29 AD. Later, Luke tells us that, at the time of the crucifixion, “there was a darkness over all the Earth” which lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour, also mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

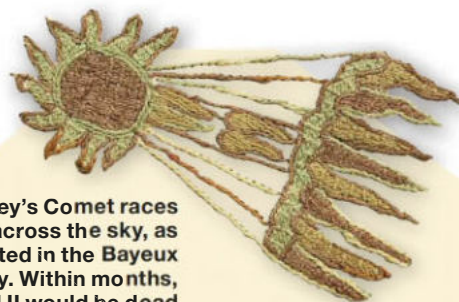
Luke goes on to specify that “the sun was darkened”. That sounds like an eclipse – and there was one. It took place on 24 November AD 29 and passed through Syria and Iraq. It wasn't total in Judaea, but it would have been very nearly so.

Coincidence? Perhaps. It certainly complicates the chronology, because if Luke was referring to the eclipse of November AD 29 when describing the crucifixion, he was leaving less than a year for John to complete his teaching and Jesus to perform his ministry. Perhaps Matthew, Mark and Luke were using their memory of the eclipse of AD 29 to add symbolism to their accounts.



An 18th-century painting of a solar and lunar eclipse described in the New Testament

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Halley's Comet races across the sky, as depicted in the Bayeux tapestry. Within months, Harold II would be dead

4 Halley's conquest

A comet in 1066 spelled doom for the English (at least that's what the Normans would have us believe)

The trouble with treating a celestial phenomenon as an omen is the question of who the omen is meant for, and whether it is a good or bad one. The most reliable answers generally come afterwards.

Halley's Comet returns every 75–76 years. But it wasn't until 1705 that the English astronomer Edmond Halley realised that, since a comet had been regularly reported at that interval, it must be the same one. One of those occasions was in 1066, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle announcing that, around Easter time, “a portent such as men had never seen was seen in the heavens”. Visible

for a week, it was described by some as the “long-haired star”.

According to the Bayeux tapestry, this long-haired star spelled bad news for poor Harold II. As his compatriots look up at the comet with wonder, the English king is portrayed being warned by a figure, presumably an astrologer, that the comet is an omen of doom.

William I, on the other hand, regarded it as a positive portent – though that, of course, was in retrospect. A few scenes later, the future Conqueror is shown building his armada, buoyed up with celestially inspired confidence.

5 Drowning in bad luck

An eclipse in 1133 took the blame for a string of calamities to strike 12th-century England

Henry I's death on 1 December 1135 was a challenging time for England. His son William had been drowned in the White Ship disaster of 1120. His first wife was already dead, and his second, Adeliza, whom he had married in 1121, had borne him no children.

Henry was left only with his daughter Matilda, the Holy Roman Empress. Surely she could bring the royal family a little luck? Well, no, actually. The baronry and the church were appalled by the prospect of a woman ruling England in her own right, and their disaffection crystallised in the figure of Henry's nephew Stephen of Blois who, following Henry's death in 1135, seized the English throne. What followed was 19 years of civil war, a period of turbulence that's now remembered as the Anarchy.

So what was the cause of this ill fortune? According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, you needed to look no further than the celestial event that, it says, occurred four months earlier, on 2 August 1135, when “the light of the day was eclipsed” as Henry sailed to France. There was indeed an eclipse on 2 August, passing over northern Britain and central Europe – but in 1133! Perhaps the 1133 eclipse was just too good a story for the Chronicle to miss. Or maybe, by the time the Chronicle was written down, the two events had been unconsciously conflated.

This 13th-century miniature from a manuscript of the Cambrai Apocalypse shows John the Evangelist (thought to be the author of the Gospel of John) looking on as a number of calamities befall Earth: an earthquake rocks the land, the sun turns black, the moon red, and kings take refuge in caves. Through the centuries, people have associated celestial events with Armageddon – a fact reflected in the political turmoil that struck England in 1652



6 England cowers before the apocalypse

As the sun disappeared over England in 1652, during the volatile political climate after the Civil War, people feared the end of the world

In 1652 England was still coming to terms with Oliver Cromwell's victory over the royalists in the Civil War. On 8 April, by our reckoning, Monday 29 March by theirs (England still being on the Julian calendar, then behind the corrected Gregorian date by about 10 days), a total solar eclipse passed through the north-east Atlantic. It crossed Ireland, Wales, north-western England and Scotland, just scraping the north-west coast of Scandinavia. It's rare

for Britain to be virtually the only land crossed by an eclipse. In London, almost the whole solar disc was obscured.

The eclipse had been "much threatened by astrologers", according to the diarist John Evelyn. Apocalyptic tracts were circulated ominously, warning of the impending "Black Monday", which would be "the precursor of great calamities and mischiefs". These same tracts likened the probable fallout to the "horrid calamities" that befell the Jews after

the crucifixion, when another eclipse was said to have occurred.

Fifth Monarchists – a group of violent Puritans who would seek to overthrow the government – believed the Second Coming of the Messiah was imminent. Despite efforts to reassure congregations, the state of national agitation was so great that the country ground to a standstill that day. "Hardly any would work," noted Evelyn, and many hid in their houses all day.

7 Arabs strike from the shadows

Lawrence of Arabia used a lunar eclipse to devastating effect in the war with the Ottomans

Lunar eclipses, when the Earth casts its shadow across the full moon, have a whole different level of potency to their solar equivalents. More frequent and more widely visible, the sight of a blood-red moon in the dead of night can have a powerful effect.

In July 1917, during the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman empire, Lawrence of Arabia was making his way across the desert towards the Turkish stronghold of Aqaba with his Arab army. He had to fight his way past two outpost defences first. On 4 July they came to the first outpost, called

Kethira. The Arabs were fearful, believing the full moon would compromise their chances of a night attack. Lawrence, armed with his diary, reassured them "for a while there should be no moon".

He was right. Lawrence knew that a lunar eclipse was due, and when it appeared on cue (on the night of 4/5 July 1917), it terrified and distracted the Turks, who were now "firing rifles and clanging copper pots to rescue the threatened satellite". Kethira duly fell, and Lawrence's celebrated attack on Aqaba followed on 6 July. **H**

Guy de la Bédoyère is a historian and writer. His books include *Praetorian: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Imperial Bodyguard* (Yale, 2017) and *The Real Lives of Roman Britain* (Yale, 2016)

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MAGAZINE

► Read the September issue of **BBC Sky at Night Magazine** (on sale 20 August), which features advice on how to get great eclipse photos. skyatnightmagazine.com



AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

Queen Victoria's unexpected bond with a young Indian servant threatened to undermine not only her rule, but the entire British empire. A new film reveals the remarkable true story



Transport yourself back to London in 1887 with this sumptuously realised period drama full of blistering wit and heartfelt charm. With spectacular celebrations underway for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, an Indian jail clerk is transported thousands of miles to England, to present her with a token from his home country. Yet before Abdul Karim can find his feet in this alien land of bland food, pompous manners and terrible weather, he strikes up an unexpected bond – with none other than the queen herself.

Director Stephen Frears' new film tells a unique true story of how a young Muslim servant found himself at the heart of power in Victoria's empire.

Heading up a star-studded cast, Academy Award winner Judi Dench presents a fresh take on the queen. While the ageing Victoria may have been sharp-tongued and stubborn, she was also inquisitive, witty and more than willing to throw the royal rulebook out of the window.

Despite being Empress of India, Victoria never set foot in the vast country she ruled over. From the Quran to curry, Abdul educated the queen about his country's rich culture, even teaching her to speak Urdu. Before long, he had not only become Victoria's teacher, but also her most trusted confidante. "Although the pair came from opposite ends of the social spectrum, they forged a strong friendship which crossed all barriers," says historian Shrabani Basu. "Abdul spoke to Victoria as if she were an ordinary person, rather than an empress."

A CONTROVERSIAL CONNECTION

As Victoria's devotion to Abdul persisted, the bewilderment of her advisors turned to outrage, triggering a crisis in the royal household that threatened to undermine – or even overthrow – the monarch.

Although Victoria may be one of British history's most familiar figures, this fascinating chapter of her life went undocumented for more than a century. "Following her death, the queen's relationship with Abdul came close to being deleted from history," says Shrabani Basu. "But it's a captivating and crucial story that deserves to finally be told."

VICTORIA & ABDUL

IN CINEMAS SEPTEMBER 15



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MAGAZINE

The death of Diana

A carpet of flowers

Mourners left more than a million bouquets outside Kensington Palace in the wake of Princess Diana's death in a car crash on 31 August 1997. The scale of public grief "escalated to a point when few people could remember a precedent", says Dominic Sandbrook



When grief gripped a nation

What does the extraordinary outpouring of emotion that followed Princess Diana's death tell us about the state of Britain 20 years ago?

Dominic Sandbrook investigates

Complements a new TV drama *Diana and I* on BBC Two

BBC TWO



The death of Diana

There are moments in history when you can feel a nation changing course, and the summer of 1997 felt like one of them. On the first day of May, the British electorate had unceremoniously slammed the door on 18 years of Conservative government, handing Tony Blair's Labour party the biggest landslide in postwar history. When, in the small hours of the morning, Blair addressed Labour's election-night party at the Royal Festival Hall, he began with the words: "A new dawn has broken, has it not?"

At lunchtime the following day, as his car pulled into Downing Street for the first time, London was bathed in brilliant sunshine. Britain, Blair had once said, must be a "young country" again. And as the new prime minister shook hands with the lines of Labour activists waving their Union Jacks, there was a palpable sense that something had changed.

Three months later, on Sunday 31 August, Blair was in his constituency home in the north-east of England when he heard the terrible news that Diana, Princess of Wales had been killed in a car crash in Paris. Almost immediately his thoughts turned to what he would say, scribbling some thoughts on the back of an envelope. Among them was a phrase suggested by his press chief, Alastair Campbell, that came to capture the public's

relationship with the dead woman. "She was," he told the cameras that morning, "the people's princess."

Later, Blair himself admitted that it sounded like "something from another age. And corny. And over the top." But it caught the public imagination for a reason. For in the next few days, the popular reaction to Diana's death escalated to a point when few people could remember a precedent.

Outside her London home, Kensington Palace, well-wishers left more than a million bouquets. At the family home, Althorp, so many people tried to bring flowers that the police begged them to stay away because the traffic chaos was endangering public safety. When Diana's funeral was held at Westminster Abbey on 6 September, an estimated three million people poured into the streets of London, while a further 2.5 billion people watched the worldwide television coverage.

A global spectacle

I was in the Balkans that summer, backpacking after graduating from university. Diana's death made the front page of every Bulgarian newspaper for days. On the day of her funeral, I and my friends were in a little Black Sea fishing village. At the appointed hour, a man came out into the square carrying a battered old television, and the locals gathered around to watch the pictures. The spectacle of the

In 1997, Britain was just emerging from a period in which **crying in public was regarded as a sign of weakness**

villagers solemnly listening to Charles Spencer's eulogy, delivered in a language almost none of them understood, was one of the most extraordinary things I have ever seen.

Twenty years on, Diana's death remains an obvious landmark in our recent history. Yet the passions that surrounded it – the fury at the popular press, which was thought to have hounded her to her grave; the outcry at the royal family, who were criticised for their reluctance to mourn more publicly; even the enthusiasm for Tony Blair, who saw his public satisfaction rating rise to a record high – have now faded to the point when many feel almost embarrassed to recall them.

In the aftermath of the wedding of Prince William, the diamond jubilee and the birth of a new heir, the monarchy has never been more

REUTERS/GETTY

In pictures: Britain mourns the 'people's princess' in 1997



LEFT: Princess Diana during a visit to an Angolan minefield, 15 January
RIGHT: A visibly shaken Tony Blair reacts to the news of Diana's death, 31 August

FROM L TO R: Charles Spencer and Princes William, Harry and Charles at Diana's funeral

popular. Despite having left office 10 years ago, Tony Blair is arguably one of the least popular public figures in the country. And even Diana herself has disappeared from our national conversation to an extent that would have seemed unimaginable in those heady days after her death. By 2016 there were even reports that her grave at Althorp was overgrown and neglected, a metaphor for the way the most photographed woman in the world has faded from our national story.

What does it all mean? And what will future historians make of the moment when, as the legend has it, a nation wept as never before, and when the monarchy itself seemed in peril?

Public frenzy

The first obvious point is that Diana's death was *not* unprecedented. Royal occasions have always provoked public fervour and commanded vast crowds, while one of the few certainties of history is that the death of an attractive young woman, especially one with small children, will always produce more public tears than the demise of an older one, or a man. The frenzy following Diana's death was indeed different from the more solemn reactions to the deaths of George VI in 1952 or Victoria in 1901. But there is actually a good precedent for the events of 1997: the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales in 1817.

As the eldest child of the future George IV, Charlotte would have become queen if she had lived. Like Princess Diana, she was the child of an unhappy marriage with a complicated love life of her own. Her father tried to arrange a match with the Prince of Orange, but despite signing a marriage contract, she eventually broke off the engagement. At one point, when her father tried to confine her to her house, she fled, managing to escape by the simple process of running into the street and hailing a cab. Not surprisingly, all this made her a national celebrity: whenever she took a coach to the seaside, she was invariably mobbed by huge crowds.

Alas, after a successful marriage to the future Leopold I of Belgium, Charlotte died at the age of 21 while delivering a stillborn son. In the aftermath, the country was plunged into mourning.

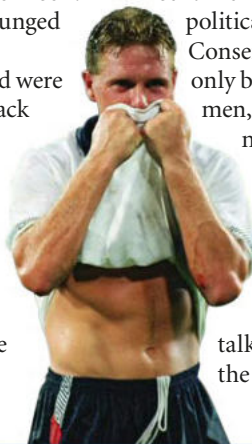
Even the poorest people in the land were reported to be wearing makeshift black armbands, while the capital's shops, the docks, the law courts and the Royal Exchange closed for two weeks. The story goes that demand for colourful ribbons and other bright clothes collapsed so completely that manufacturers begged the government to reduce the mourning period, which they

resolutely refused to do. As the Whig politician Henry Brougham remarked: "It really was as though every household throughout Great Britain had lost a favourite child."

One lesson of Charlotte's death is that there is nothing the British people enjoy so much as a chance to indulge their taste for public sentimentalism. But there was an obvious difference between 1817 and 1997. In the age of the Regency, nobody talked of the stiff upper lip. In the late 1990s, thanks not least to Paul Gascoigne (pictured below left), who had wept so spectacularly at the end of the 1990 World Cup, Britain was only just emerging from a long period in which public tears were generally regarded as weak and unmanly.

In this context, the outpouring of national sentiment at Diana's death had a clear political connotation. The outgoing Conservative administration had not only been dominated almost entirely by men, it had been led by a prime minister immensely unlikely to burst into tears in public, the determinedly understated and ostentatiously unemotional John Major.

But if Major was a man who always seemed uncomfortable talking about his feelings in front of the cameras, Blair was different. And



GETTY



Elton John sings 'Candle in the Wind' in Westminster Abbey



Spectators weep at the funeral procession, Whitehall, 6 September. Two out of three Britons professed to being upset, or very upset, by Diana's death

Three other deaths that broke Britons' hearts

1997 was far from the first time that the country was devastated by the demise of a public figure

Princess Charlotte of Wales, died 1817

Like Diana, Charlotte captured the public imagination like no other member of the royal family. When the daughter of the future George IV died in childbirth at the age of 21, *The Times* thought it a national "calamity" – although the radical poet Shelley claimed that the execution of three men in Derby, who had been convicted of plotting against the government, was a much greater calamity.

When her funeral was held in Windsor, thousands turned out to watch, and "the road and streets through which it passed were lined with spectators".

Afterwards, Charlotte's doctor, who blamed himself for her demise, committed suicide.



Princess Charlotte's death in childbirth was deemed a national "calamity"



Victoria's funeral procession snakes through London, February 1901

Queen Victoria, died 1901

Since Victoria was 81 when she died, her death hardly came as a shock. But, as she had been on the throne since 1837, millions of people had never known another monarch, and her funeral was a genuinely international event, with one of the largest gatherings of European royals in history.

Victoria had left detailed instructions, asking for her coffin to be draped in white, and requesting a military procession, with the coffin on a gun carriage. Again the funeral was held in Windsor, with thousands lining the streets. But every city in the British empire observed a period of mourning, from Canada to India.

Horatio Nelson, died 1805

Perhaps the most spectacular and emotional funeral in British history was that of Lord Nelson, killed during the victory at Trafalgar in 1805. Nelson was not only an all-conquering admiral who had saved his country from invasion, he was a national celebrity.

When his body lay in state in

Greenwich, the crowds were so great that thousands were turned away. The funeral ceremonies took five days, including a procession along the Thames and a simple but moving ceremony at St Paul's, which ended with the sailors from HMS *Victory* ripping up their ship's battle-torn flag.



A contemporary illustration shows the funeral carriage carrying Nelson's body outside St Paul's Cathedral

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY

With its invocations of the people against a remote elite, 1997 can look like a harbinger of things to come

his visibly emotional reaction – the tremor in his voice, the sentimentalism of his words – struck a chord with a nation rediscovering the intoxication of collective tears.

There was another element to the death and funeral of Princess Diana: the extraordinary prominence of a man who, only a few years earlier, would have been an utterly implausible guest at such a solemn royal occasion. This was Elton John, whose rendition of ‘Candle in the Wind’, which he memorably performed at Westminster Abbey, soon became the most popular single of all time.

Released on Saturday 13 September 1997, ‘Candle in the Wind’, rocketed to number 1 within minutes of the shops opening. By lunchtime that day, most stores had already sold out; the next day, Mercury Records sent a thousand employees to the printing presses to prepare another million copies for Monday. By this point the record had already sold more than 600,000 copies, going platinum in just 24 hours. By the end of the year, sales had reached almost 5 million, which meant that one in five households owned a copy.

Rock royalty

In a wider context, the remarkable thing was not the song’s astounding popularity so much as the fact that Elton John had performed it at all. He was hardly an obvious candidate to sing at such a solemn royal occasion. The former *NME* journalist Barbara Ellen thought “a pop song at a royal funeral seemed about as appropriate as receiving holy communion in a nightclub toilet”. Meanwhile the *Spectator*’s Simon Hoggart wrote that “there was something deeply moving about the sight of a plump, red-nosed gay in a ginger wig performing at a royal occasion of any kind”.

One reader of the *Guardian* was less deeply moved. “Who suggested that Elton John sing at the funeral?” complained Raul Jaylan of London N11. “I’m sorry, but this man made Freddie Mercury’s tribute concert look cheap. Hopefully he will at least take that stupid rug off his head.” But as the record sales suggest, most people were rather more charitable. Indeed, at one level the success of ‘Candle in



The gun carriage carrying Diana’s coffin approaches Westminster Abbey. An estimated 2.5 billion people watched her funeral on television

the Wind’, like the spectacle of Diana’s funeral itself, was a powerful reminder that no successful monarchy can ignore the appeal of popular culture.

Fifteen years later, after the concert that marked the 2012 diamond jubilee, the conservative columnist Peter Hitchens lamented that the Queen had “pledged allegiance to the vile new culture of talentless celebrity”. Yet monarchies have always harnessed the energies of their most successful, fashionable and popular cultural figures, from Hans Holbein’s portraits of Henry VIII and Handel’s coronation anthems for George II to the Queen’s cameo alongside James Bond at the 2012 Olympics. In that sense, there was nothing inappropriate about Elton John’s presence at Diana’s funeral.

The greatest temptation is to see the reaction to Diana’s death as a reminder, in an increasingly individualistic age, of the appeal and power of collective national sentiment. Twenty years on, when our politics is much more visibly informed by questions of patriotism, national identity and collective belonging – Scottish or British? British or European? – the first week of September 1997 looks like a harbinger of things to come. After all, squabbles about flags and invocations of the ‘people’ against a remote elite are only too common today.

Yet perhaps Diana’s death also serves as a lesson that, whatever grand pattern we impose on the past, it can never be anything other than a partial and misleading sketch. Yes, millions turned out for her funeral. But a poll afterwards found that, while two out of

three people said they had been upset or very upset by her death, the rest had been relatively unmoved. Three out of ten had either laid flowers or wanted to; yet seven out of ten had no intention of doing so.

During the funeral, as the historian Thomas Dixon remarks, the television cameras unwaveringly zoomed in on faces streaked with tears or contorted with emotion. What they did not capture, though, were the faces that remained unmoved, or the millions of people who were simply doing something else.

No doubt there were many people like that in 1817, too: those who simply got on with their lives, even as their neighbours pulled on the black crepe. Historians rarely mention them, of course. But they were there, all the same. **H**

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and television presenter. His books include *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979* (Penguin, 2013)

DISCOVER MORE

TELEVISION

► **Diana and I**, a drama about the events of 1997, is due to air on BBC Two soon



MAGAZINE

► For more on Princess Diana, read our collector’s edition magazine, **Royal Women**, available at buysubscriptions.com





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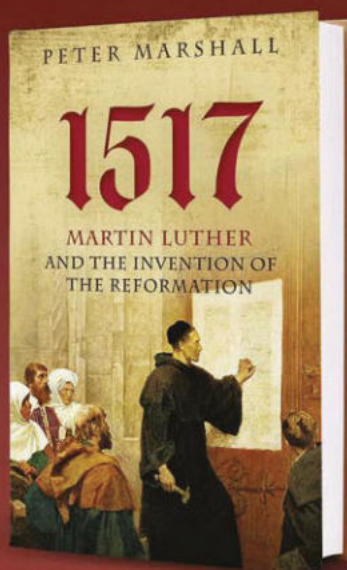
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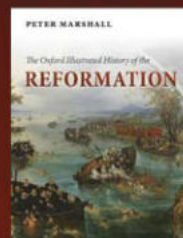


1517 Martin Luther and the Invention of the Reformation

Peter Marshall

Did Martin Luther really post his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Castle Church door in October 1517? Probably not, says Reformation historian Peter Marshall. But though the event might be mythic, it became one of the great defining episodes in Western history, a symbol of religious freedom of conscience which still shapes our world 500 years later.

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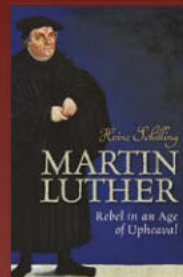


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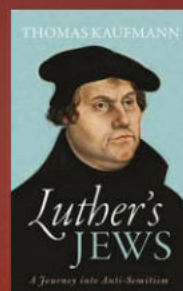


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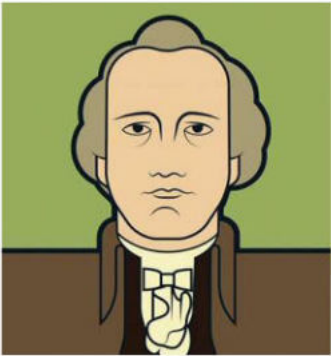
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HISTORY HOT 100



We asked readers and historians to vote for the historical figures that most interest them at the moment. The results are in: **this is the History Hot 100 for 2017...**

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN / ILLUSTRATIONS: ANDY TUOHY / DESIGN: RACHEL DICKENS



Welcome to this year's *BBC History Magazine* Hot 100 list, featuring the historical figures that have been fascinating you in 2017. We asked you to each nominate up to three people, who could have lived in any historical period (but who died more than 30 years ago). The full list is presented here, along with comments on the results from historians. The characters and rankings are bound to provoke controversy...

Charlotte Hodgman
Deputy editor



100 Isambard Kingdom Brunel

1806–59

★ British civil and mechanical engineer

99 Francis Drake

c1540–1596

★ English admiral and navigator

98 Christopher Columbus

c1451–1506

★ Italian explorer and navigator

97 Catherine Howard

c1524–42

★ Fifth wife of Henry VIII

96 Anne Neville

1456–85

Queen consort of Richard III

95 Simon de Montfort

c1208–65

★ Rebel baron

94 Nikola Tesla

1856–1943

★ Serbian-American inventor

93 Isabella of France

1295–1358

★ Queen consort of Edward II

92 Margaret Tudor

1489–1541

★ Daughter of Henry VII, sister of Henry VIII

91 King Arthur

possibly sixth century

★ Legendary British warrior and king

90 Cecily Neville

1415–95

★ Mother of Edward IV and Richard III

89 Richard I

1157–99

English king, known as 'the Lionheart'

88 Thomas More

1478–1535

Tudor statesman and author

87 Thomas Jefferson

1743–1826

Founding Father and third US president

86 Marie Curie

1867–1934

★ Polish-French physicist and chemist

85 Hatshepsut

★ See box right

84 Harold II

c1022–1066

England's last Anglo-Saxon king

83 Catherine de Medici

1519–89

★ Italian noblewoman and queen of France

82 Bess of Hardwick

1527–1608

★ Elizabethan noblewoman

81 Anne Frank

1929–45

★ German-born Jewish diarist

80 Muhammad

c570–632

Prophet and founder of Islam

79 John of Gaunt

1340–99

★ Third surviving son of Edward III

78 Isabella I of Castile

1451–1504

★ Queen of Castile and Aragon



85 Hatshepsut

c1507 BC–c1458 BC

★ One of only a few known ancient Egyptian female pharaohs, Hatshepsut reigned in her own right, from c1473–58 BC. However, Hatshepsut's royal reign really began in c1479 BC when she acted as regent for her infant stepson, Thutmose III. By the end of his seventh regnal year, Hatshepsut had been crowned king and had adopted all pharaonic titles and regalia, co-ruling with her stepson. In images, she was depicted with a male body wearing the traditional pharaonic kilt, crown and false beard.



77 George Washington

1732–99

★ Founding father and first US president

76 Anne of Cleves

1515–57

German-born fourth wife of Henry VIII

75 Florence Nightingale

1820–1910

★ Founder of modern nursing

74 Owain Glyndŵr

c1350–c1416

★ Welsh ruler and rebel

73 Marie Antoinette

1755–93

★ Austrian-born queen of France

72 Katherine Parr

1512–48

Sixth and last wife of Henry VIII

71 Vlad the Impaler

1431–76

★ Prince of Wallachia, Romania

70 Leonardo da Vinci

1452–1519

Italian Renaissance polymath

69 Edward III

1312–77

★ King of England

68 Charles I

1600–49

King of England, Scotland and Ireland

67 Charles Dickens

1812–70

★ British writer and social critic

55 Alexander Hamilton

c1755/57–1804

Alexander Hamilton came to the attention of George Washington during the American Revolutionary War, becoming the general's aide-de-camp. After training as a lawyer, he was elected to the lower house of the New York legislature and eventually earned himself a place at the Constitutional Convention as representative for New York. Hamilton was consequently one of the founding fathers of the US Constitution, and had a profound influence on its ratification. When Washington was elected to the presidency, he appointed Hamilton the country's first secretary of the treasury.
Down 40 places from 2016

66 Katherine Swynford

1350–1403

Third wife of John of Gaunt

65 Albert Einstein

1879–1955

German-born theoretical physicist

64 Cleopatra

69 BC–30 BC

★ Last active pharaoh of ancient Egypt

63 Alan Turing

1912–54

★ Computer scientist and cryptanalyst

62 Tsar Nicholas II

1868–1918

Last emperor of Russia

61 Lady Jane Grey

1537–54

Queen of England for nine days

60 Joseph Goebbels

1897–1945

★ Propaganda minister for Nazi Germany

59 Franklin D Roosevelt

1882–1945

32nd US president

58 Charles Darwin

1809–82

British naturalist, geologist and biologist

57 King John

1166/67–1216

King of England who sealed Magna Carta

56 Clement Attlee

1883–1967

British prime minister

55 Alexander Hamilton

See box left

54 1st Duke of Wellington

1769–1852

British prime minister and military leader

53 Henry V

1387–1422

King of England and victor at Agincourt

52 Francisco Franco

1892–1975

★ Military dictator of Spain

51 Æthelflæd

c870–918

★ Anglo-Saxon ruler of Mercia

50 Mahatma Gandhi

See box right

49 Catherine the Great

See box below

48 Charles II

1630–85

King of England, Scotland and Ireland

47 Louis XIV

1638–1715

French monarch, known as the Sun King

46 Karl Marx

1818–83

German philosopher and political theorist

**49 Catherine the Great**

1729–96

The daughter of a minor German prince, Catherine (born Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst) became a member of Russian royalty following her marriage to Grand Duke Peter, heir to the Russian throne. Catherine overthrew her husband shortly after he became tsar in 1762, and was declared empress, a title she would hold for more than 30 years. Expanding the empire was her priority: territories gained during her reign include Crimea, Belarus and Lithuania. She was also a great patron of the arts and education.

Down 19 places from 2016**45 Edward I**

1239–1307

★ King of England

44 Augustus

63 BC–14 AD

★ Considered the first Roman emperor

43 Julius Caesar

100 BC–44 BC

Roman ruler, general and statesman

**50 Mahatma Gandhi**

1869–1948

Born to a wealthy Hindu family in north-west India, Gandhi's first experiences of nonviolent civil disobedience came while he was practising law in South Africa, in response to the Indian community's struggle for civil rights. In around 1921 he became leader of the Indian National Congress, leading campaigns for a number of social causes and to end British rule in India. One of his most famous protests was the 240-mile Dandi Salt March of 1930, challenging the British-imposed salt tax. Gandhi was assassinated in 1948.

Non-mover from 2016**42 John F Kennedy**

1917–63

35th US president

41 Genghis Khan

1162–1227

★ Founder of the Mongol empire

40 Isaac Newton

1643–1727

Mathematician, astronomer and physicist

39 Henry II

1133–89

First Plantagenet king of England

38 Oswald Mosley

1896–1980

★ Leader of the British Union of Fascists

37 Vladimir Lenin

1870–1924

★ Russian communist revolutionary

36 Joan of Arc

1412–31

French martyr, saint and military leader

35 Martin Luther King

1929–68

Religious activist and civil rights leader

34 Jane Austen

★ See box below

33 Empress Matilda

1102–67

Claimant to the English throne

32 Catherine of Aragon

1485–1536

Spanish-born first wife of Henry VIII

31 William the Conqueror

c1028–87

First Norman king of England

30 Abraham Lincoln

1809–65

16th US president and opponent of slavery

29 Josef Stalin

1878–1953

Soviet revolutionary and dictator

28 Boudica

c30–60

Ancient British queen of the Iceni tribe

27 Alexander the Great

356 BC–323 BC

King of Macedonia

26 Mary I

1516–58

England's first queen regnant

25 Horatio Nelson

1758–1805

British naval commander

24 Edward IV

1442–83

First Yorkist king of England

**22 Thomas Cromwell**

1485–1540

Born the son of a Putney brewer, Cromwell's big break came when he landed a job working for Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII's powerful first minister. When Wolsey fell from grace after failing to gain papal permission to annul Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Cromwell advised Henry to break with Rome and make himself head of the Church of England, allowing the king to marry Anne Boleyn. Cromwell soon became Henry's right-hand man but ended up on the scaffold having arranged the king's disastrous marriage to Anne of Cleves.

Down 14 places from 2016**23 Emmeline Pankhurst**

1858–1928

British suffragist and political activist

22 Thomas Cromwell

See box above

21 Oliver Cromwell

1599–1658

English soldier and statesman

Turn the page for the top 20...

34 Jane Austen

1775–1817

★ This year sees the 200th anniversary of both Jane Austen's death and the publication of two of her novels: *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*. Austen's first known writings date from c1787, with *Sense and Sensibility* the earliest of her novels to be published in her lifetime, in 1795. Austen, who never married, is celebrated as one of England's favourite authors: her six novels – all published anonymously at first – are a window into the life of the landed gentry in the 18th and 19th centuries. She is believed to have died of Addison's disease, an endocrine disorder.





19 Martin Luther

1483–1546

On 31 October 1517, after witnessing corruption in the Catholic church, German theologian Martin Luther supposedly nailed his *95 Theses* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church. In them, he condemned the practice of selling 'indulgences' to absolve sin and stated that salvation could be reached by faith, not deeds. Luther was condemned by the Catholic church but his work sparked the Protestant Reformation.

Up 36 places from 2016

20 Napoleon Bonaparte

1769–1821

French military and political leader

19 Martin Luther

See box above

18 Margaret Beaufort

1443–1509

Mother of King Henry VII

17 Elizabeth of York

1466–1503

Queen consort of Henry VII

16 Elizabeth Woodville

1437–92

Queen consort of Edward IV

15 Jesus Christ

c6-4 BC–30 AD

Religious leader central to Christianity

14 William Marshal

c1146/47–1219

Anglo-Norman soldier and statesman

13 Benito Mussolini

1883–1945

Italian Fascist dictator

12 Henry VII

1457–1509

First Tudor king of England

11 Mary, Queen of Scots

1542–87

Scottish queen and French queen consort

10 Henry VIII

1491–1547

King of England

9 William Shakespeare

1564–1616

English poet, playwright and actor

8 Queen Victoria

1819–1901

British queen and empress of India

7 Adolf Hitler

1889–1945

Dictator of Nazi Germany

6 Winston Churchill

1874–1965

British wartime prime minister

5 Anne Boleyn

See box below

4 Elizabeth I

1533–1603

Queen of England

3 Alfred the Great

849–899

King of Wessex

2 Eleanor of Aquitaine

See box above right



5 Anne Boleyn

c1501–36

Anne spent much of her childhood at the French court, returning to England in 1522 where she proceeded to dazzle Henry VIII. By 1533, Anne was pregnant with the king's child and the pair were secretly married. In 1534, Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was finally annulled and Anne was crowned queen. But a series of failed pregnancies combined with accusations of adultery saw Anne sent to the scaffold in 1536.

Down 1 place from 2016

2 Eleanor of Aquitaine

c1122–1204

Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, became one of the most powerful women in Europe when she married Louis, heir to Louis VI of France in late July 1137. The French king died the following month and Eleanor became queen of France, a title she would hold for 15 years. An unsuccessful crusade to the Holy Land in 1147–49, combined with Eleanor's perceived failure to provide Louis with a son, soured the relationship and the couple divorced in 1152. Her second marriage to the future Henry II saw her become queen of England and, later, mother to the future Richard I.

Up 5 places from 2016



HOLDING ON TO THE TOP SPOT



1 Richard III

1452–85

Interest in the Yorkist king reached fever pitch in 2012 when his remains were found beneath a Leicester car park.

Mystery still surrounds Richard, not least whether he was responsible for the deaths of his nephews – Edward V and his younger brother, Richard – who mysteriously disappeared from the Tower of London in the summer of 1483.

Richard III's death at the battle of Bosworth heralded the dawn of the Tudor dynasty as Henry Tudor took the throne of England, marrying Richard's niece, Elizabeth of York. Five monarchs would sit on the throne for more than a century of Tudor rule. Richard III, meanwhile, still continues to divide opinion.

What the experts say

From medieval monarchs to 20th-century despots, a huge range of historical human life is contained within this year's History Hot 100. We asked a selection of leading historians to dissect the results and comment on what they tell us about historical discourse in Britain right now

Fern Riddell

"Popular history has never been so strong, or important"

Is the Age of Great Men finally dead, and have we actually arrived in an Age of Equality? If the History Hot 100 is anything to go by, the answer to that is a resounding yes. Women are rising at lightning speed through the chart, and new lives are featuring beside well-known names. The indomitable Bess of Hardwick, Catherine de Medici and Hatshepsut all make first-time appearances, demonstrating powerful women are fully capable of reaching across time to captivate us, as popular history brings their little-known stories to light,

As we face huge social upheaval, the desire to understand human nature also

stands out. Jane Austen, Nikola Tesla and Marie Curie bring in the worlds of literature, science and medicine, while the battle of good vs evil is clear in the rise of Adolf Hitler, Jesus, Goebbels and Joan of Arc.

Popular history has never been so strong, or so important, because it keeps us questioning the world around us, and how we can make it better for everyone.



Fern Riddell is author of *A Victorian Guide to Sex* (Pen & Sword, 2014)

Michael Scott

"Our ancient focus, it seems, is still far too much on the Mediterranean"

This is clearly the year when the ancients climb the charts and make big strides forward into the public consciousness! The historical Jesus has climbed 42 places from 2016; Alexander the Great is up 10; Boudica is up 38; and Cleopatra and Hatshepsut are new entries. But even more interesting is who from the ancient world is not in the list.

While rulers such as Alexander, Cleopatra and Hatshepsut are in from the Greek and Egyptian worlds, not a single Roman ruler or emperor is in the top 40. Instead the 'rebels' against Roman rule – Jesus and Boudica – are the ones in vision. It seems we want a different kind of Roman history – not one in which we recite rulers' names, or learn more about

the traits of these particular powerful individuals, but rather examine the bubbling undercurrents/counter-currents in Roman society.

The other absence in the list is any ancient from Asia, India and the east – what about the rulers of the Qin and Han dynasties for instance? While we like our modern history with a more global flavour, our ancient focus, it seems, is still far too much on the Mediterranean.



Michael Scott is a historian and broadcaster. His latest book is *Ancient Worlds: An Epic History of East and West* (Hutchinson, 2016)

Rana Mitter

"The boundaries of history stop at the borders of Europe"

The Hot 100 has a decent mixture of men and women and it's also chronologically wide-ranging – everything from medieval kings to contemporary politicians. But the boundaries of history do stop mostly at the borders of Europe and are concentrated within the UK. And when we do hit 41, the top non-western figure is Genghis Khan. At least he's being balanced out by Gandhi at 50 – and I'm glad to see Hatshepsut, nipping in at 85.

Might this change in future years? Non-western history is beginning to make its way into the school curriculum – could we see Mao Zedong there in future? The Chinese empress Wu Zetian? In universities and in publishing these days Britain boasts a wide expertise in history. We need to do more to spread that message.



Rana Mitter is professor of the history and politics of modern China at the University of Oxford

Janina Ramirez

"We are drawn in by big events"

The Hot 100 list tells me, sadly, nothing I didn't already know about how we relate to historical figures. We are drawn in by big events, we are attached to great monarchs and even terrible figures, and we remember a few who made great changes. A list like this risks reducing history to individuals.

As a cultural historian, I believe the full fabric and texture of the past is composed of so many factors: literature, art, social organisation, philosophy, religion, economics. These lists are interesting, but they are a single and stultifying way to see the rich and endlessly unfolding discipline of history.



Janina Ramirez is a cultural historian, broadcaster and author

Marc Morris

“The seating plan is essentially unchanged since 2016”

Focusing on the top 10, the most striking thing is the degree of stasis. Victoria and Alfred the Great have joined the top table, but otherwise the seating plan is essentially unchanged since 2016. Richard III tops the board for the third year, and does not want for royal company, surrounded as he is for the most part by other English monarchs. Readers seem as determined as ever to disprove Monty Python’s assertion that you don’t vote for kings. Further down the list, the outstanding trend is the rise of the fascists. Mussolini has surged 61 places, almost joining Hitler in the top 10, and there are strong new entries from Mosley, Franco and Goebbels. Is this genuine historical curiosity or a worrying reflection of current political fashion?



Marc Morris is a historian and broadcaster. His most recent book is *William I* (Allen Lane, 2016)

Joanne Paul

“The cast of *The Tudors* is fading”

Whereas last year’s top five represented the standard make-up of a lecture on the Tudors, this year’s list represents a broader approach to history (though few non-European figures make the list). The widening of historical interest away from an exclusive look at the Tudors (followed closely by the Second World War) is refreshing, and perhaps says something about the sources of interest in historical figures. The casts of *The Tudors* and *Wolf Hall* are fading, while those of *The White Queen*, *The Last Kingdom* and a number of films and books stake their claims to our historical imagination. If this assumed connection is correct, then perhaps we – as the generators of such historical outputs – need to embrace the opportunity to steer interest in new directions and to more unexplored shores.



Joanne Paul is lecturer in history at the University of Sussex. Her books include *Thomas More* (Polity, 2016)

Dan Jones

“What this year’s list really shows is that people remain fascinated by one big idea: power”

Historians recently spent a few weeks shouting at each other on social media about the whiteness, maleness and general conservatism of historical TV commissioning and history festival line-ups.

Many in my line of work feel that the great British public is being swindled out of its chance to learn more about long-gone figures from the margins. I do not contest the righteousness of that argument but it sails against the evidence.

The 2017 History Hot 100 demonstrates unequivocally that people are still intrigued by kings and queens, emperors and dictators, generals and prime ministers. The only historical personages in this year’s top 20 who do not fall into one of those categories are William Shakespeare, Martin Luther and Jesus.

That is not to say that the list wholly lacks diversity: Jesus was an Israelite,

Genghis Khan was a Mongol and Martin Luther King... was Martin Luther King.

Behind the seemingly unmovable Richard III in first place, it is cheering to see the leading spots evenly contested between men and women, with Eleanor of Aquitaine, Elizabeth I and Anne Boleyn dominating the top of the list.

But what this year’s list really shows is that people remain fascinated by one big idea: power. I commend my fellow historians who wish to make the world other than it is, but as John Adams once said: facts are stubborn things.



Dan Jones is a historian and broadcaster. His book *The Templars: The Rise and Fall of God’s Holy Warriors* is out this month, published by Head of Zeus

Greg Jenner

“These top 10 historical icons are old favourites, most of whom would have polled highly in 1957”

I am currently writing a book about the history of celebrity, so I am keenly aware of how star names linger in our cultural imagination.

These top 10 historical icons are old favourites, most of whom would have polled highly in 1957. Indeed, while the wider top 100 includes new entries (hooray for Æthelflæd!), it too reflects long-standing traditions in popular history.

Men predominate by two-thirds; of the women included, all but seven were royals. Indeed, royal identity accounts for about half of all entries, while around 50 per cent of the top 100 wielded direct political power. Nearly a third fought on a battlefield. Roughly 60 per cent are people drawn from British history. More than 90 per cent of the people in the poll were Caucasian, despite exciting recent research by historians of black and

Asian British history.

All of this feels very familiar. However, what did shock me is that scientists, cultural icons and explorers (just Drake and Columbus) are poorly represented, as are social reformers. And I’m surprised that ancient history received a meagre six entries.

All considered, this poll suggests we remain most interested in our own island story, particularly the themes of power, politics, royalty and war. But Britons also used to be passionately interested in radicals, reformers, revolutionaries, and pioneers. There are a handful in this list, but not nearly as many as I expected.



Greg Jenner is author of *A Million Years in a Day: A Curious History of Daily Life* (W&N, 2015)

David Olusoga

"The big story this year has to be the number of women, almost a third of the 100"

If it wasn't for Shakespeare, the only cultural figure in the top 10, the top places would be entirely dominated by men and women who wielded political and military power. With Hitler, Mussolini and Henry VII all in the top 20 there's no shortage of history's strong men, but as the list goes on it gets more surprising.

The big story this year has to be the number of women, more than a third of the 100. Of course, that's nowhere near 50-50 parity, but the number of female figures is, to me, strong evidence that the readers of history books and the audiences that watch history

documentaries are after histories that are less male-focused.

The other great take-away has to be that the Tudors still reign supreme. If we include Richard III, whose defeat and death left the way open for Henry Tudor, half of the top 10 are figures from that greatest of all dynastic epics.



David Olusoga is a historian and broadcaster. His most recent book is *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (Macmillan, 2016)

Joann Fletcher

"At long last we are moving away from the same old names"

It's no surprise Richard III remains at number one, the discovery of his remains in 2012 having done so much to generate interest in him. Yet it is striking that four of the top 10 in this year's list are women, with Eleanor of Aquitaine up five places to number two.

There is an overwhelming number of British figures throughout, with my own favourites, Cleopatra and her pharaonic predecessor Hatshepsut, only making 64 and 85. Yet both are new entries and are the only Egyptian pharaohs on the list, with

no sign of Tutankhamun! It seems that, at long last, we are moving away from the same old names to engage with far more diverse characters, many of whom are increasingly featured on TV and in the popular media – long may this continue!



Joann Fletcher is visiting professor in archaeology at the University of York. Her latest book is *The Story of Egypt* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2015)

Peter Frankopan

"We take huge comfort in name-checking the same heroes and villains"

This year's History Hot 100 offers no surprises, with all the usual suspects present albeit with some movements up and down. But it does reveal a lot about how we view the past. We take huge comfort in name-checking the same heroes and villains, the same stories, and the same episodes from history that we've heard about time and again.

It's amazing, though, in the global world of the 21st century that there is not a single figure from Chinese history; apart from Gandhi, not one from south Asia; not a single ruler, scholar, writer or artist from nearly 3,000 years of Persian history;

not one person from the Arab world; not one from the Ottoman or great Khmer empires. And not one from Africa from the last 2,000 years.

I'm too much of a realist to call this list depressing but it is predictable, insular and narrow to the point of being blinkered. It's not just unadventurous and boring to find the same names again and again. I think it distorts history itself.



Peter Frankopan is author of *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (Bloomsbury, 2015)

Tracy Borman

"The eclectic mix of new entries is reassuring"

Henry VIII down five places? Three of his wives down 80 places between them? Even that stalwart of the top 10, Elizabeth I, has slipped from second to fourth. Does *BBC History Magazine's* latest Hot 100 poll signal the demise of the dynasty that has dominated British history for the past 500 years? Not necessarily.

Henry VII, founder of the dynasty, has moved up the chart, as have his wife and mother. And of course, his vanquished rival, Richard III, has held onto the top slot for the third year running.

Perhaps, in this age of the prequel, we're getting more interested in what happened before the most famous events in our history. With Alfred the Great and Boudica making great strides up the chart, we may also be experiencing a *Game of Thrones* moment.

The eclectic mix of new entries is reassuring. With everyone from Cleopatra to Charles Dickens entering the frame, perhaps the overall message from this year's list is that our historical tastes are broader than ever before. **T**



Tracy Borman is joint chief curator for Historic Royal Palaces. Her most recent book is *The Private Lives of the Tudors* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2016)

DISCOVER MORE

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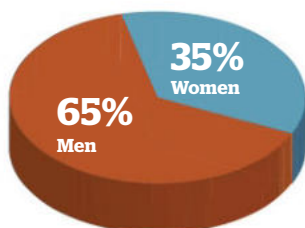
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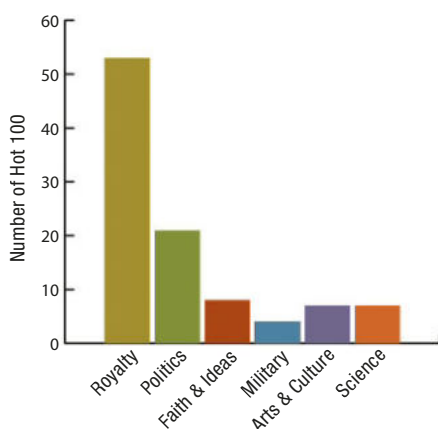
Number crunching

A breakdown of this year's History Hot 100 – from the big movers, to how they died

Gender split



Field with which the Hot 100 are most associated



Five casualties from 2016's list

Tutankhamun
Matthias I
Charlotte of Wales
Ada Lovelace
Samuel Pepys

Top 5 monarchs

Richard III
Alfred the Great
Elizabeth I
Queen Victoria
Henry VIII

Top 5 people born outside Britain

Eleanor of Aquitaine
Adolf Hitler
Mussolini
Jesus
Martin Luther

Top 10 risers

Mussolini up 61
Joan of Arc up 50
Nelson up 43
Jesus up 42
Boudica up 38
Martin Luther up 36
JFK up 35
Empress Matilda up 31
Emmeline Pankhurst up 25
King John up 24

10 biggest fallers

Charles II down 28
Duke of Wellington down 31
Harold Godwinson down 32
Richard the Lionheart down 33
Anne of Cleves down 38
Thomas Jefferson down 38
Alexander Hamilton down 40
Catherine Parr down 41
Henry V down 42
Thomas More down 43

Top 10 new entries this year

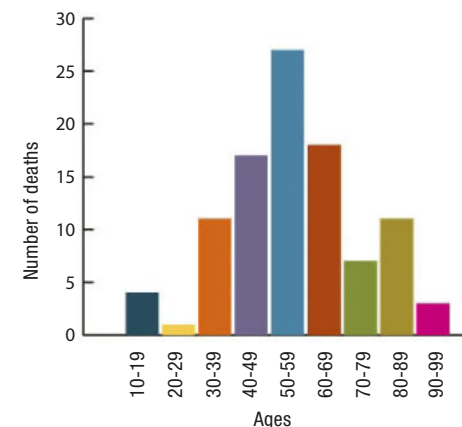
34 Jane Austen
37 Lenin
38 Oswald Mosley
41 Genghis Khan
44 Augustus
45 Edward I
51 Æthelflæd
52 Francisco Franco
60 Joseph Goebbels
63 Alan Turing

Nations with which the Hot 100 is most associated (based on modern borders)

Britain 56
Democratic Republic of Mongolia 1
Egypt 2
France 7
Germany 6
Greece 1
India 1
Israel 1
Italy 6
Poland 1
Romania 1
Russia 4
Saudi Arabia 1
Serbia 1
Spain 3
USA 8



Age at death (of those definitively known)





Clair Wills photographed in London. "What is really sad is that the people who had the highest hopes about life here were often those who encountered the worst discrimination," she says

Photography by Helen Atkinson



INTERVIEW / CLAIR WILLS

"I wanted to get underneath, to the everyday stories of life as an immigrant"

*Clair Wills talks to **Ellie Cawthorne** about her new book documenting the experiences of immigrants who arrived in postwar Britain seeking a better life*

PROFILE CLAIR WILLS

Clair Wills teaches at Princeton University. She is the author of *That Neutral Island: A History of Ireland During the Second World War* (Faber & Faber, 2008), *Dublin 1916: The Siege of the GPO* (Profile, 2009) and *The Best Are Leaving: Emigration and Post-War Irish Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

IN CONTEXT

Following the Second World War, an exhausted Britain witnessed unprecedented levels of migration, as displaced European refugees and economic migrants from across the globe arrived to fill the gaps in the workforce. Clair Wills' new book aims to reconstruct what life was like for those who arrived in postwar Britain, through the eyes of the immigrants themselves.

Why were you interested in looking at postwar Britain through the eyes of immigrants?

Histories of the postwar period are dominated by the idea that Britain “never had it so good”. In that story, immigration appears only incidentally, when race relations reached crisis point. So we hear about the 1958 Notting Hill riots, the 1964 Smethwick by-election (in which Conservative Peter Griffiths was elected after an explicitly racist campaign), and Enoch Powell's ‘rivers of blood’ speech. But what about everything in between? I wanted to get underneath the big political story to the variety of smaller everyday stories about life as an immigrant in postwar Britain.

I was keen to get away from looking at immigrants from the perspective of the host community, as very often they were thought of as a problem, in explicitly racialised terms. Some British people were constantly complaining about immigrants committing crime, increasing queues at the doctor's, taking up primary school places or being benefit scroungers. So there's an enormous amount of source material if you want to tell that story. Getting at the other side of the story is much harder. You have to find first-hand accounts from immigrants themselves.

What state was Britain in after the Second World War?

The Ministry of Labour was absolutely panicked about the lack of manpower. It took a long time for those in the armed services to be demobbed, while a number of women who had been corralled into wartime work now wanted to leave. On top of this, the school leaving age was raised in 1947. All of this took large numbers of people out of the workforce. So the ministry was desperate to fill this gap, and encouraging migration was one solution.

With some exceptions, 1940s Britain was a largely monocultural community. Migrants stuck out a mile, even the Irish, who claimed in memoirs that they could recognise each other from a mile away.

What motivated people to move to Britain in this period?

The majority were economic migrants. We think of the wave of ‘Windrush’ migrants from the Caribbean, but until the mid-1950s they were only a tiny proportion of the people who came to work in Britain. Irish, Indian and Punjabi migrants were also moving to Britain, because there was no work for them back home. Meanwhile, the Second World War had left Europe with a huge amount of displaced persons. Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians and Poles were also brought to Britain from refugee camps in Germany, largely in order to work.

British companies and the government were actively going abroad to source workers on group work schemes. London Transport ran a ‘Barbados scheme’ to recruit bus conductors, while leaflets written in Punjabi offered £10 to anyone who could convince a friend to come and work in Yorkshire's mills. These schemes could transform communities – Bedford's London Brick Company sourced its workers from Calabria, and by the end of the 1960s, 20 per cent of Bedford's population was Italian.

There's an assumption that migrants took the jobs that British people no longer wanted. But that's only partly accurate. It's true that after the war, the British were used to more modern workplaces and didn't want to work in grim foundries with no toilets, or as cleaners in TB isolation hospitals in the middle of nowhere. Migrants did take these jobs, but they were also filling new jobs, which British people also didn't want. As factories and mills modernised, new low-grade jobs were created that were very

hard to fill. For example, Yorkshire mills replaced old equipment with expensive new machines that were not worth turning off at night. This created a new night shift that the locals had no intention of working, so migrants from Mirpur and the Punjab were brought in.

What did migrants expect their new lives in Britain to be like?

What is really sad is that the people who had the highest hopes about life here were often those who encountered the worst discrimination. West Indians usually left for Britain amid an atmosphere of celebration. As members of the Commonwealth, they thought they were going to the mother country. I was amazed to discover the number of people who really believed this imperial rhetoric. They had been educated to think that they were part of British culture, but for the most part their dreams of belonging here were cruelly crushed.

The Irish, on the other hand, left home in an atmosphere of absolute dread. The Catholic Truth Society published pocket-sized pamphlets for those going to England, advising them to avoid drinking too much, or fraternising with “women of low repute”. When my mother left Ireland for England in 1948, she was warned to watch out for English men in dancehalls who “couldn't keep their trousers up”. For the Irish, migration was a moment of resignation, panic, misery and tragedy. There are countless stories of people weeping as the train pulled away, as if they would never return. In a sense, the Irish were right – in this period, emigration really was a door closed on the past. There was no Skype or cheap airfares. Communication was difficult, while journeys took a long time and were often prohibitively expensive.

How successfully did immigrants integrate in this period?

The displaced refugees from Europe's camps knew very well that they would be staying for good. They could not go home, as borders had been changed and the countries they came from often no longer existed. As they knew they would be in Britain long-term, you would think that these groups would have integrated quickly. But actually, perhaps to do with language difficulties, it was only the second generation of these refugees that became fully at home here.

“British companies and the government were actively going abroad to source workers”



Immigrants arrive at Victoria Station, 1956. "West Indians usually left for Britain amid an atmosphere of celebration," says Wills. "They believed the imperial rhetoric"

Meanwhile, most economic migrants arriving at the beginning of the postwar period didn't imagine they were going to stay for long at all. They generally intended to come to Britain for just a few years before returning home with the money they'd made. For that reason, there was less emphasis on integration.

Things changed in 1962, however, when the Commonwealth Immigrants Act capped migration by 'unskilled' workers. While the act was intended to slash immigration levels, in fact it had directly the opposite effect. As large numbers of Indian and Pakistani men could no longer come over alone to work for a few years and send money home, these men decided to bring their families over and settle more permanently. In 1962, before the act, around 1,000 women and children moved to Britain, whereas after, in 1963, this number boomed to around 20,000. Integration was much smoother for people who got married or had families. Once you had children in the school system, you were required to interact with a much more varied section of British society.

What were the most fascinating sources you came across?

I came across a wonderful epic poem, called a Qissa, by Madho Ram, a Punjabi migrant who arrived in Wolverhampton to work in a foundry in 1958. It describes being taken to the pub for the first time, living in overcrowded lodgings and having a relationship with a white woman. Then his wife back

home finds out, and things get very dramatic. Ram wrote his Qissa over about 12 years and used to perform it in the local pub.

Another was the writing of the Jamaican-born sociologist Stuart Hall. He moved from London to the West Midlands in the mid-1960s, and spoke about encountering an appalling, openly racist atmosphere there that he hadn't come across elsewhere in Britain. Hall's experiences highlight how many indigenous Britons found it hard to open up to difference presented by immigrants, and one response to that was racism.

Part of the story of immigration in this period is one of increasing racism, as what began in the 1940s as xenophobia about outsiders, narrowed and became more particularly focused on colour. In the West Midlands, Hall encountered a disenfranchised community that felt it had been left behind. He described discovering "a historical resentment that latched on to race", and I think that's really true of this period.

Where can we still see the impact of postwar immigration today?

From pizza and ice cream to swing music, Indian curry and Italian clothing, there are many brilliant things. But the most important thing the British have gained is a sense of their own difference. Many people found it hard to open up to alternative cultural mores and ways of living. But whether they wanted to or not, the indigenous Britons who found immigrants moving into their areas learnt about difference.

"Much of the language used about immigration now is exactly the same as that used throughout the 40s and 50s"

Why do you think the experiences of postwar immigrants are still important in 2017?

As the Brexit referendum highlighted, immigration is a major topic of debate in Britain, so it's really important that we know about its history. Much of the language still used about immigration – about lack of resources, for example – is the same as that used in the 40s and 50s. I don't think it can hurt for us to recognise that. If we are still using the same rhetoric under very different circumstances, then perhaps there's something wrong with the rhetoric. ■



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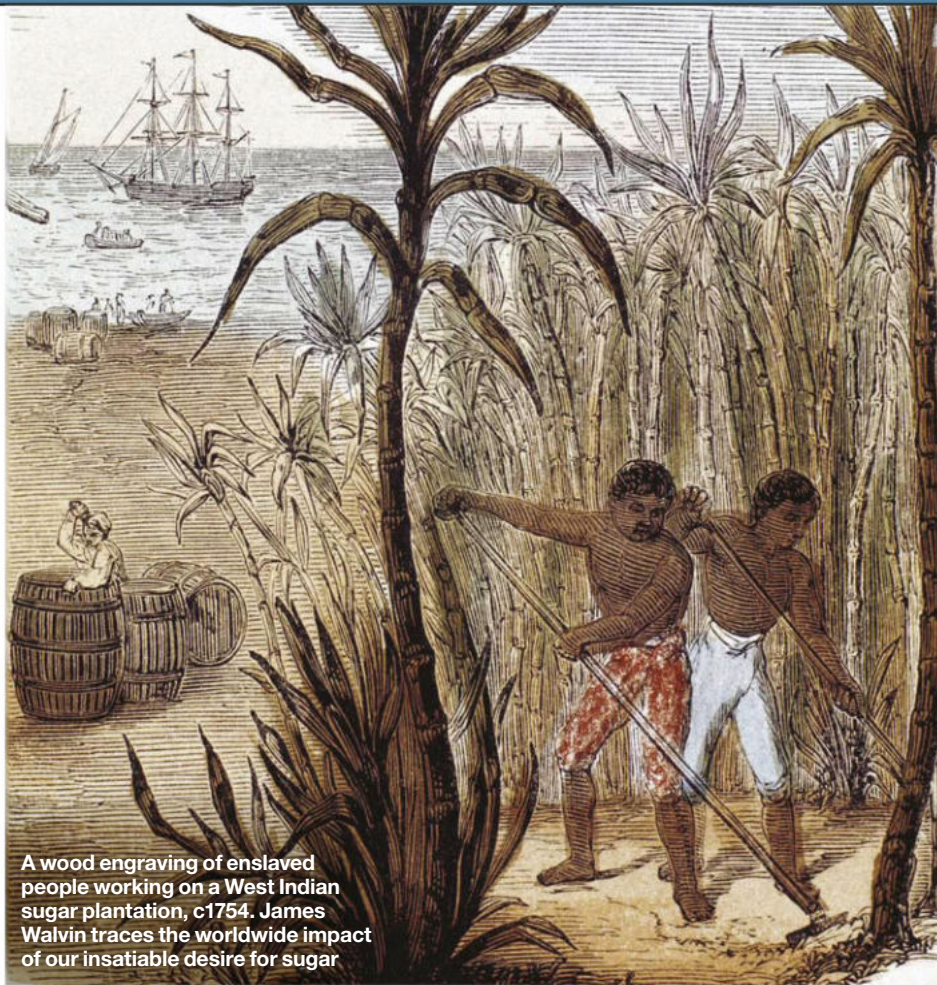


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A wood engraving of enslaved people working on a West Indian sugar plantation, c1754. James Walvin traces the worldwide impact of our insatiable desire for sugar

expensive. Yet despite all this, as Walvin explains, sugar has one enormously alluring attraction: it satisfies our seemingly innate desire for sweet tastes. What's more, sugar satisfies that desire more completely than any other natural form of sweetness ever can. But the satisfaction that sugar provides comes at a terrible cost, both to those who produce it and those who consume it.

In clipped, to-the-point prose Walvin catalogues the strange and, on the face of it, unlikely story of how an Asian luxury product, traditionally used in tiny amounts, and only by the very richest, became a staple food for billions of people.

Sugar changed world history more profoundly than any other crop. It created the economic rationale for the Atlantic slave trade and for the African wars and chaos that fuelled it. The importation of sugar cane transformed the landscapes of the Caribbean islands and great swathes of the southern US. As billions of Europeans and Americans became accustomed – or perhaps more accurately, addicted – to sugar, the battle to meet demand transformed world demographics.

We're familiar with the terrible story of how millions of enslaved Africans were trafficked to the Caribbean, the US and Brazil, but the insatiable global demand for sugar also led to the migrations of other groups. In the aftermath of abolition, in the British West Indies the plantation owners invented what became known as the Indian indentured labour system, in which thousands of poor Indians were shipped from their homeland to the Caribbean, South America and Fiji.

The profitability of sugar production also inspired American producers to ship Japanese peasants to plantations

Walvin catalogues how an Asian luxury product became a staple food for billions of people

Not so sweet stuff

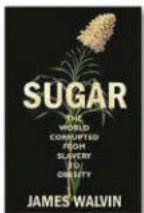
DAVID OLUSOGA *admires a new work tracing the history of our damaging love affair with sugar*



Sugar: The World Corrupted, from Slavery to Obesity

by James Walvin

Robinson, 352 pages, £18.99



The idea of exploring the past through the history of a single crop has been around for a while. What is striking about James Walvin's new book is that, while focusing solely on sugar, it does not restrict itself to the past. Rather, it takes the story of perhaps the most transformative and destructive boom-crop of all time

and brings it disturbingly into the present day.

Walvin, a world-renowned historian of slavery and the Caribbean, begins his global history of sugar in the place where most of us begin our relationship with the stuff: the sweet shops of childhood memory. If sugar is a guilty pleasure then it is one in which almost every one of us indulges on a daily basis. The unstoppable march of sugar, over the centuries and across the world, of course raises the question: why? After all, cane sugar is difficult to grow and the successive processes of refinement and clarification required to produce edible sugar are protracted and



COMING SOON...

"Next issue, we'll be talking to **Anne Applebaum** about *Red Famine*, her new account of the causes and consequences of the devastating 1932-33 **famine in Ukraine**. Plus, as always, we'll have expert reviews of the pick of the latest history titles"

Matt Elton, reviews editor

in Hawaii, and Australians to import South Sea islanders to their tropical regions. The story of sugar, then, is not just one of changing diets and expanding waistlines, but also one of mass migrations – both forced and voluntary, both familiar and unfamiliar.

Just as the story of sugar in the 18th and 19th centuries is inevitably dominated by the phenomenon of Atlantic slavery, sugar's story in the 20th and 21st centuries can only be told with reference to the development of American agri-business and the postwar rise of the giant food corporations, most notably the Coca-Cola Company. This, as Walvin reveals, is because the soft drinks and confection-

The modern anti-sugar movement echoes the sugar boycott of the early 19th century

ery industries grew to become the modern-day delivery system for the sugar-laden diets that have led to sugar becoming a pariah crop.

The modern anti-sugar movement that is demanding better labelling and the reduction of sugar in foods and drinks marketed at children, strangely echoes the sugar boycott that was launched by the abolitionists in the early 19th century, for moral rather than health reasons.

There are passages in Walvin's latter chapters that read like an account of the spread of a narcotic, which is not far from the point. The sugar industry stands today where the tobacco corporations stood in the 1960s, accused of knowingly exacerbating a global health crisis and a vast obesity epidemic. This is just the latest moral crisis faced by the purveyors of the sweet stuff. **H**

David Olusoga is a historian, writer and broadcaster. His programmes include BBC Two's *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners*

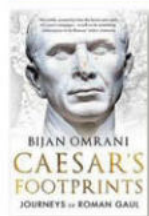
On the warpath

MILES RUSSELL enjoys a richly descriptive work following Caesar's path to victory over the Gauls

Caesar's Footprints: Journeys to Roman Gaul

by *Bijan Omrani*

Head of Zeus, 400 pages, £25



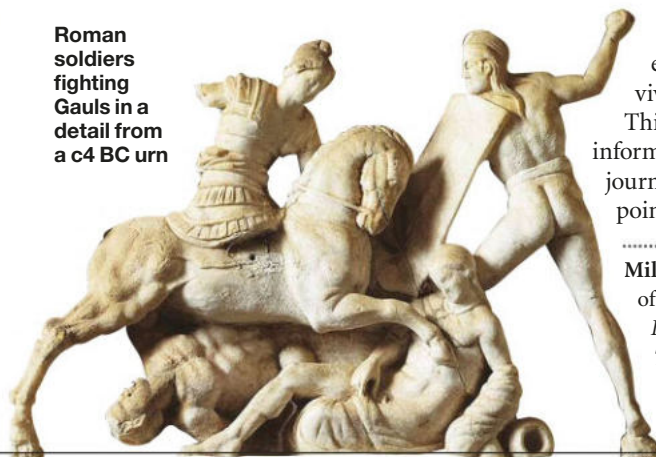
One of Caesar's 'greatest' achievements was the conquest of Gaul, successfully overcoming the tribes that inhabited an area spanning much of western Europe.

Between 58 and 52 BC, Caesar's war against the barbarians at Rome's north-western frontier caused the deaths of more than a million innocent men, women and children, many more being enslaved in the process.

At the end of it all, Gaul became one of the most thoroughly Roman of all European provinces – there being little of the indigenous population left with the will to resist.

Caesar's war was nothing more than a well-organised slaughter, conducted primarily to advance his own rather warped political agenda. By the time that the last embers of Gallic resistance were being stamped out, Caesar had become an immensely powerful man, rich from the spoils of war and with his own loyal, battle-hardened force of heavily armed, well-paid psychopaths. With such backing, he could finally set his eyes on the ultimate prize: Rome herself.

Roman soldiers fighting Gauls in a detail from a c4 BC urn



During the seven-year campaign of butchery, Caesar documented events in a series of dispatches from the frontline. Written in the third person (a literary masterstroke, making the work appear less egocentric), the *Gallic Wars* provide a unique perspective on the populations of Gaul, Germany and Britain.

Using Caesar's account as a source, many have tried to trace the war on the ground, most notably Emperor Napoleon III (reigned 1852–70) who successfully located a number of battlefields. To his credit, Bijan Omrani, the latest to follow in Caesar's footsteps, does not try to excuse the general's actions nor gloss over his brutality. Although marketed as a personal journey, this is so much more than a glossy retelling of the campaign – or, indeed, a simple travelogue.

Omrani's writing crackles from start to finish, providing a wealth of detail, both then and now. Expertly weaving the primary source with his own experiences, Omrani explores the topography, archaeology, history and culture of the land, the Caesarean war and its aftermath. From Marseilles where "water, boats and masts seem to vaporise in the heat, suspended in a haze of ochre and peach dust above the grand frontages measuring the length of the quay", to Deal where "the slate heavy air is relieved by bright blue tubs and tarpaulins, stacked with green crates, the winding of ropes and nets and waving

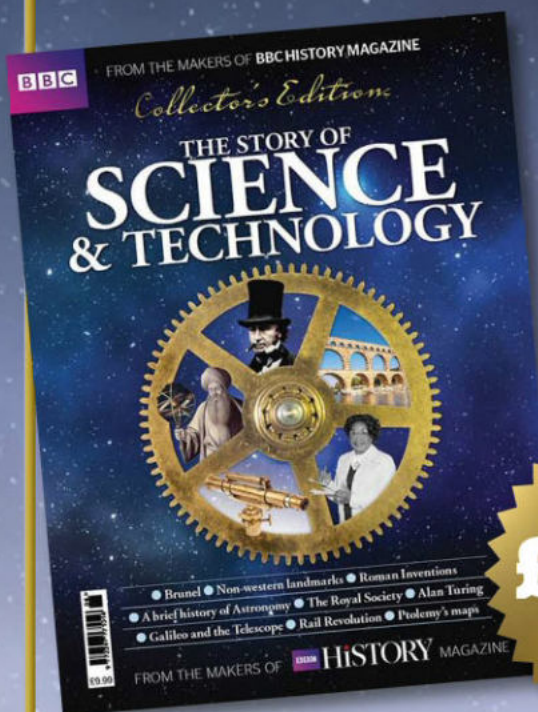
ensigns", Omrani is never less than an entertaining and vividly descriptive guide. This is a hugely enjoyable, informative and evocative journey through a turning point in world history. **H**

Miles Russell is the author of *Arthur and the Kings of Britain: The Historical Truth Behind the Myths* (Amberley, 2017)

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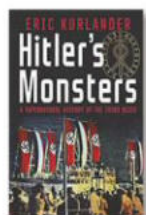
Mystic Nazis

ROGER MOORHOUSE *admires a new book investigating the connection between Nazism and the occult*

Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich

by Eric Kurlander

Yale University Press, 448 pages, £25



In April 1945, Gerda Bormann wrote to her husband, Martin, in Hitler's Reich Chancellery in Berlin to lament Germany's imminent demise. The situation, she explained, reminded her of the Götterdämmerung – the twilight of the gods. “The wolf Fenris and the snake Mitgard are storming over the bridge,” she wrote. “The citadel is tottering.”

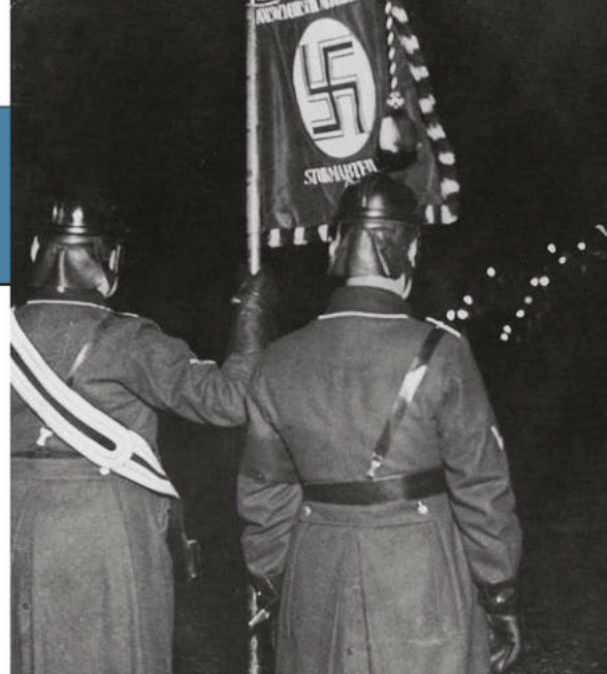
One might have imagined that, in the desperation of their final fight, the German people would have had more important matters in mind than such outlandish mumbo-jumbo. But, as Eric Kurlander's new book makes abundantly clear, the occult and the supernatural were important ingredients of the Third Reich. The interconnection goes right back to the origins of Nazism in the

cultural ferment of early 20th-century Munich, when extreme nationalists shared the political fringes with pseudo-intellectuals espousing all manner of mysterious philosophies, from theosophy and ariosophy to hyperboreanism and geomancy.

Fast-forward to Hitler's Germany, and many Germans, including senior Nazis such as Heinrich Himmler and Alfred Rosenberg, were already devotees of various esoteric belief systems, ranging from the comparatively benign – anthroposophy and dowsing – to the downright insane, like World Ice Theory.

Yet, Kurlander suggests that esoterica and what he quaintly calls ‘border science’ were not confined to the elite, and were much more widespread in the Third Reich than has previously been appreci-

**Even the lightning
runes of the SS were
part of the same
ideological gibberish**



ated. Indeed, he argues that the supernatural had a material influence on Nazism.

His examination of Nazism's twisted relationship with German occult and esoteric circles is thorough, clear-eyed and – crucially – archivally based. He makes the case very well that Nazi propaganda and rhetoric were influenced by occult themes, such as the Slavic or Jewish ‘vampires’ threatening Germany, or the ‘werewolves’ of the Nazi resistance. Even the lightning runes of the SS were part of the same package of ideological gibberish. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Gerda Bormann was busy quoting Norse mythology as the Third Reich collapsed.

However, the wider question – that of the occult actually having an influence beyond mere rhetoric and propaganda – is

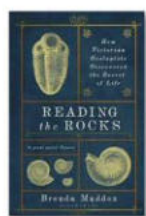
Rocks and roles

PATRICIA FARA *considers a book that gives credit to the work of key players in the 19th-century's geological discoveries*

Reading the Rocks: How Victorian Geologists Discovered the Secret of Life

by Brenda Maddox

Bloomsbury, 272 pages, £20



In her wonderful book about Rosalind Franklin, *The Dark Lady of DNA*, Brenda Maddox described the fierce rivalries involved in the race to unravel the double helix.

In her latest exposé of ungentlemanly conduct, *Reading the Rocks*, she reveals the competitive quest for a different secret of life – its origins in prehistory.

Maddox's hero is Charles Lyell, the myopic lawyer who dedicated his life to interpreting the Earth's hidden messages from the past. An ambitious man, he chose his bride carefully, settling on Mary Horner, daughter of an influential scientist and well-trained in editing, translating and cataloguing. Although Lyell could never bring himself to accept

that he should count apes among his ancestors, his argument that the same slow forces of change have been in operation for millennia gave Charles Darwin the courage to formulate his theory of evolution by natural selection.

Maddox knows how to pick the best of the familiar stories. At Oxford, William Buckland became renowned for his alcohol-fuelled dinner parties featuring cooked mice, tortoise and other delicacies, but his first celebrated coup was to crawl into a Yorkshire cave full of fossil elephants and rhinoceroses and discover the hyenas who had killed them. Like Lyell, Buckland relied on a concealed female expert: Mary Anning, the uneducated fossil collector – rarely credited by the metropolitan gentlemen



Members of the SS in Berlin mark *Sonnwendfeier*, the summer solstice celebration, 1938

not so convincingly addressed. Kurlander is rightly wary of making grand claims in this regard, but his subtext is nonetheless one of an influence made increasingly prevalent as the war progressed.

Yet concrete evidence of this is still lacking. Nazism was hardly a rational creed, but it is difficult to believe that the melange of nonsense that constituted the German occult fringe was ever more than one of many ideological drivers behind it.

This should not detract from an impressive whole, however. Despite a few exaggerations and extrapolations, Kurlander's is a thoughtful, well-written and extremely welcome contribution. **H**

Roger Moorhouse is the author of *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939–1941* (Vintage, 2016)

who exploited her skills – whose discoveries revolutionised British geology.

As Maddox explains, Lyell's 18th-century predecessors had already discarded any literal interpretation of the Bible. Even so, by putting Lyell centre stage, she reinforces the misguided view that before Darwin everybody believed the Earth was only 6,000 years old. She neglects Darwin's own grandfather Erasmus, who, almost 10 years before Charles was even born, wrote that the world resembles "one great slaughterhouse, one universal scene of rapacity and injustice", articulating a view strikingly similar to evolution by natural selection. **H**

Patricia Fara is the president of the British Society for the History of Science

GETTY IMAGES

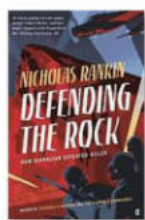
The fight for Gibraltar

JULES STEWART enjoys a new book exploring the role that a tiny plot of land played in defeating Hitler

Defending the Rock

by Nicholas Rankin

Faber & Faber, 672 pages, £20



The subtitle of Nicholas Rankin's book – *How Gibraltar Defeated Hitler* – unquestionably stands up to scrutiny. Indeed, Hitler himself unwittingly acknowledged in a letter written in February

1941 to Spanish dictator Franco that: "The attack on Gibraltar and the closing of the Straits would have changed the Mediterranean situation in one stroke."

The Nazi leader lamented the fact that Franco had refused to join the Axis and allow the Wehrmacht to cross Spain and take Gibraltar with German land forces. "Two months have been lost," Hitler said, "which otherwise would have helped decide world history."

Never in the course of modern warfare has so small a plot of land played so pivotal a role in deciding a major international conflict. This is especially significant when considering the array of foes menacing its doors: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Vichy France and Falangist Spain. The immediate threat to Britain's war effort was, of course, Germany.

The loss of Gibraltar – a disaster that Churchill confessed caused him sleepless nights – would have given the Axis

control of the entire Mediterranean, left the British Army in the Middle East isolated and deprived of supply lines and closed an entire future theatre of war. In such a scenario, Britain's chances of victory would have been drastically reduced, if not irretrievably lost.

Gibraltar's fate rested on Franco's appetite for joining the European conflict. Spain had just emerged from three years of civil war and he was reluctant to once again turn his country into a battlefield. What ultimately soured Operation Felix, a highly detailed German plan to take the Rock, was the list of Franco's terms for Spanish entry into the war. Apart from foodstuffs for his hungry people and equipment for his army, he demanded all of Morocco and Oran in Algeria. The führer's response was a resounding *Nein*.

The author also highlights the fascinating episode of Churchill's bribes to high-ranking Spanish generals in exchange for undertakings that Franco would not drag Spain into the war.

This meticulously researched book is well timed, as this year marks the 50th anniversary of Gibraltar's 1967 referendum, which yielded a 99.6 per cent vote in favour of continued British sovereignty. **H**

Jules Stewart is a historical author whose books include *Madrid: The History* (IB Tauris, 2015)



Gibraltar evaded enemy capture during the Second World War

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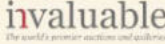


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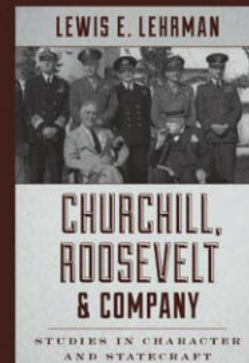
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PAPERBACKS



Nicholas II: The Last Tsar

by Michael Paterson

Robinson, 256 pages, £9.99



This year's centenary of the Russian Revolution has revived interest in the Romanov dynasty that the upheaval swept away. Michael Paterson's brief life of the ineffectual last tsar is unusual in taking a sympathetic, indeed indulgent, view of Nicholas, stressing his homely human qualities and good intentions rather than the manifold failings that doomed him, his family and his country.

Nicholas was the wrong man in the wrong time and place. Lacking the strong character of his iron-fisted father, Alexander III, the last tsar fatally and blindly followed Alexander's repressive policies when only radical reform could have saved the regime. Isolated from his people, Nicholas was only happy as a family man

following such harmless hobbies as photography. As ruler of the world's largest land, he was completely incapable of living up to the destiny he was fated to follow. He did his duty by his own dim lights, but was lost in a modern world he did not begin to understand.

Though acknowledging Nicholas's glaring faults – his dithering, his pig-headed resistance to progress and his support of savage repression to keep his feudal autocracy in place – Paterson is too inclined to sentimentalise his subject's private roles as a doting father to his sick son and, above all, his subservience to his reactionary wife Alexandra.

Fluently written and informed by a deep knowledge of Russia, the book nonetheless is confusingly organised thematically rather than chronologically, and Paterson tends to assume that all readers share his pro-tsarist views. As a result there is little information on the revolutionary movements that inevitably brought the imperial family to their cruel and bloody

end, and condemned Russia to a tyranny far worse than the rule of the Romanovs.

Nigel Jones is a historian, journalist and biographer

Londonopolis: A Curious History of London

by Martin Latham

Batsford Ltd, 224 pages, £8.99



Beginning with Neanderthals, singing to communicate with one another as they roamed the Thames

valley 500,000 years ago, and ending with Hindu Londoners in the 21st century, campaigning to scatter the ashes of their dead in the river, Martin Latham's idiosyncratic but highly enjoyable book covers a lot of territory. Well-known stories from the capital's past, such as those of the foundation of Bart's Hospital by Henry I's court jester and Peter the Great's trashing of John Evelyn's Deptford house, prove worth revisiting, and there are plenty of less familiar ones too.

Latham introduces readers to Lord Balmerino, stopping to buy gooseberries on his way to execution; to the caricaturist James Gillray, drawing the prime minister Pitt the Younger as a toadstool on a dunghill; and to the now-abandoned station on the Central Line which closed because it only had six passengers a day. He also includes a fascinating chapter on alchemists and astrologers like John Dee, and the Prussian ship's surgeon Sigismund Bacstrom who had a laboratory in the East End. Latham rightly emphasises their often unacknowledged contributions to the history of science in the city.

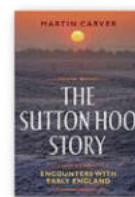
Small and niggling errors (Shakespeare was 34 in 1598, not 35; Mary Lamb killed her mother not her father) should be fixed for the next edition, because this is a delightful book and deserves a long shelf life.

Nick Rennison is a writer whose books include *A London Year: 365 Days of City Life in Diaries, Journals and Letters* (Frances Lincoln, 2013)

The Sutton Hoo Story: Encounters with Early England

by Martin Carver

Boydell & Brewer, 256 pages, £19.99



Sutton Hoo – the site of the remarkably rich boat burial first excavated in the 1930s, the treasures of

which now adorn the British Museum – sums up the mystery and majesty of the early Anglo-Saxon period. It is more than one ship though – it's a complex multi-period burial site, with other rich graves and an enigmatic group of 'sandsmen' execution victims.

Martin Carver is the man to tell the tale, having led research there for many years and published widely on it. He charts what has been found since the first investigations and details the latest interpretations in a clear and engaging style. What leaps out is how much we have learnt and how far understanding has changed since those early digs. As Carver notes: "Archaeology is not just a matter of digging things up, finding parallels and putting them in a museum." This book shows the truth of that. **H**

Dave Musgrove is content director of *BBC History Magazine*

Doomed tsar Nicholas II "was the wrong man in the wrong time and place"





DM Mark's novel follows the tribulations of a Canadian scholar searching for the bones of the apostle Simon the Zealot in the Lincolnshire countryside

FICTION

What lies beneath

NICK RENNISON enjoys a lurid tale of treasure hunting, murder and mayhem set in 19th-century England

The Zealot's Bones

DM Mark

Mulholland Books, 256 pages, £17.99



Diligence Matheson is a rich Canadian, more interested in biblical archaeology than he is in the family business. At the end of a jaunt around Europe, he arrives in Lincolnshire

where he thinks a treasure might lie. According to legend, Simon the Zealot, one of the more obscure of Christ's apostles, travelled to Britain and was martyred there. His bones, Matheson firmly believes, are buried somewhere in the Lincolnshire earth. The Canadian is determined to be the man who wins the glory of discovering them.

Accompanying him is Meshach Stone, a former British soldier, in flight from platoons of personal demons which haunt him from his service in India and Afghanistan. Stone acts as a protector to the unworldly Matheson, but they are about to face dangers for which even he is unprepared. The year is 1849 and, across the Humber estuary,

the city of Hull is being ravaged by cholera. When the two men riskily venture into its streets, they step into what will become a nightmare for both of them. Stone is looking for a prostitute who once seemed to offer him ambivalent redemption from his troubles. He learns that she has been murdered by a serial killer and vows to find the murderer and take his revenge.

Meanwhile, Matheson has fallen in with Ansell, an effete aristocrat whose collection of religious relics may offer clues to the whereabouts of Simon's bones. By accepting an invitation to stay at the country house owned by Ansell's father, the Canadian unleashes a chain of macabre events.

Self-consciously lurid and often violent, this is not a novel that will appeal to everyone. It is like a 21st-century version of a Gothic novel or of the 'sensation' novels by writers like Wilkie Collins. Filled with murder, melodrama and madness, *The Zealot's Bones* is an unsettling but thoroughly gripping read. **H**

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE GOTHIC NOVELS SET IN THE 1800s

The Fiend in Human

John MacLachlan Gray (2002)



A killer awaits execution in a London jail, but he insists on his innocence and argues that the real murderer is still on the loose.

Only two men – a balladeer peddling doggerel verse about those hanged at Newgate, and a newspaper crime reporter with a taste for alcohol and laudanum – believe him. In Gray's superbly convincing Victorian mystery, they must scour the fog-bound streets of London to corner the true fiend in human form.

Beloved Poison

ES Thomson (2016)



Jem Flockhart, a woman passing as a man in order to work as an apothecary in a ramshackle London hospital, stumbles across the coffins of six babies hidden

away in its old chapel. In her attempts to discover the story behind them, Jem ventures into dangerous territory and threatens to unearth dark secrets from the hospital's past. Terrible truths finally emerge in ES Thomson's vivid evocation of the seamier side of Victorian medicine.

The Vanishing

Sophia Tobin (2017)



Echoes of the Brontës and their many imitators abound in this entertaining and atmospheric novel.

Arriving to work as a housekeeper at White Windows, a wutheringly windswept house on the Yorkshire Moors, heroine Anna Leigh is soon introduced to the brooding, Byronic anti-hero Marcus Twentyman. Her employer has a fate worse than death in mind for her and only her own courage and ingenuity, and the love of a good man, can save her.



Streets Apart
considers
the history
of Britain's
social housing

Jonathan Wright previews the pick of upcoming programmes

TV & RADIO



Home truths

Streets Apart: The Story of Social Housing

RADIO BBC Radio 4

Scheduled for Monday 28 August

One effect of the Grenfell Tower tragedy was to bring issues around social housing into the mainstream. Offering context for these debates, Lynsey Hanley's 10-part weekday series looks back to consider how politicians, social reformers and architects have approached providing housing for those most in need. Encompassing Victorian model villages, postwar new towns and 1960s housing estates, it concludes by asking how, in 2017, social housing fits with the notion of a property-owning democracy.



Hacker Robert Morris, author of the internet's first computer worm in 1988

Tangled web

Geeks and Dreamers: The Story of the Internet

RADIO BBC Radio 4

Scheduled for Wednesday 16 August

The internet is in key respects an ungovernable space. What can we do about this? Maybe not much, suggests Aleks Krotoski in a series tracing the internet's history, because many of these problems are hardwired into it. Still, it may help us to understand how this all came about, and Krotoski profiles digital pioneers, including Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web; traces the security issues that became evident when, in 1988, Robert Morris unleashed the first malicious computer worm; and concludes by asking whether the internet needs a reboot.

Competing identities

Patrick Wright tells us about his new radio series exploring different notions of Englishness

The English Fix

RADIO BBC Radio 4

Scheduled for Monday 11 September

When all is well in Albion, says Patrick Wright, English identity is something the English themselves tend not to worry about. Rather, English identity is allowed to become subsumed by Britishness, in great part in the interests of getting on with the other home nations. But this doesn't hold true in times of crisis.

"The rallying of English identity only tends to happen in moments of emergency, when the politeness of not existing for the sake of British equality is no longer compelling," argues the writer.

It's a theme Wright explores by looking at attempts by four different figures – George Orwell, John Betjeman, Barbara Castle and the conservative political philosopher Roger Scruton – to resist a perceived enemy. The wider aim is to trace how the nation-in-peril unity of the early Second World War has fallen apart.

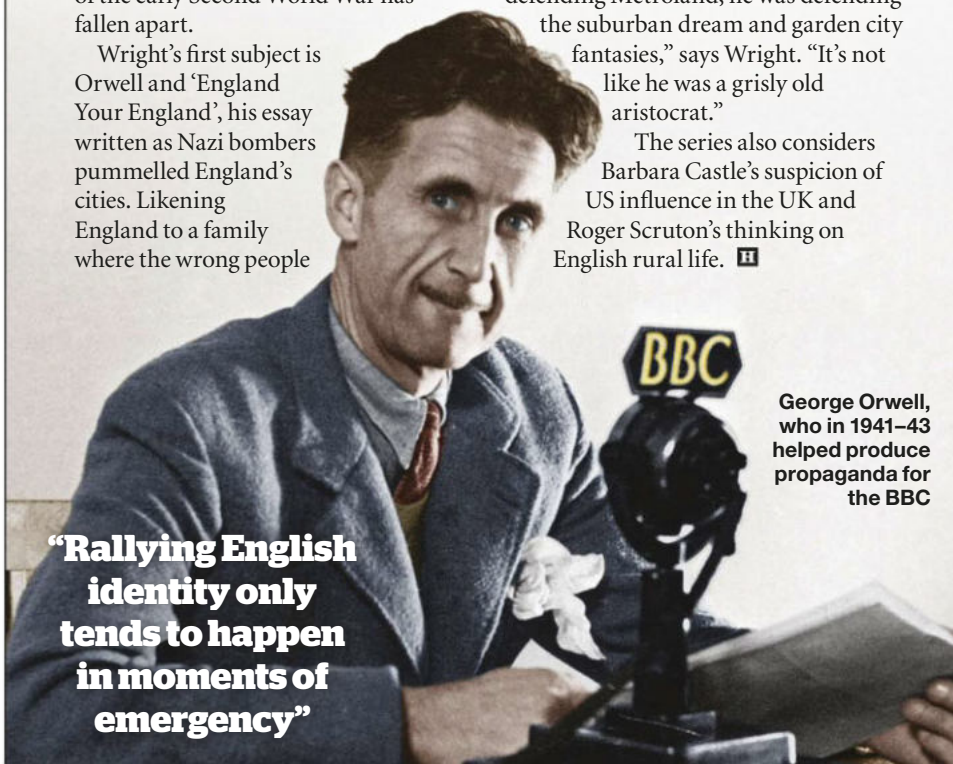
Wright's first subject is Orwell and 'England Your England', his essay written as Nazi bombers pummelled England's cities. Lkening England to a family where the wrong people

are in charge, he proposed a new kind of left-wing patriotism. "His argument was that basically you can't go into this war and rally the people without offering a better society in the future," says Wright.

It's an argument that's often been invoked down the years, yet the nuances of Orwell's writing about class and assumptions of racial superiority seem to have been lost. "Throughout this series, this is the big problem [we address]," says Wright, "that the cultural reaction to change is always to simplify complexity. That's how you rally people, you create a great simplification."

In the case of Betjeman and his battles against town planners, there's a simplification in terms of image too, in that he is often shown as "a cute old teddy bear who wrote these funny poems". Yet his position was less conservative than many allow, bound up with ideas about urban areas being pleasant places to live. "He was defending Metroland, he was defending the suburban dream and garden city fantasies," says Wright. "It's not like he was a grisly old aristocrat."

The series also considers Barbara Castle's suspicion of US influence in the UK and Roger Scruton's thinking on English rural life. **IT**



George Orwell, who in 1941–43 helped produce propaganda for the BBC

"Rallying English identity only tends to happen in moments of emergency"



Rory Kinnear plays Robert – a flamboyant Victorian surgeon – in *Quacks*

A bloody business

Quacks

TV BBC Two

Scheduled for August

In the 1840s, modern medical science was being willed into existence by showmen doctors who experimented upon themselves and upon each other. Here was an era when an operating 'theatre' was an apt description for an arena where an audience would gather to watch particularly daring surgical procedures – or even just to see an attempt at an amputation speed record. If that sounds like the cue for a serious documentary, it's actually the premise for a new sitcom that follows a quartet

of young medical pioneers – respectively a nervous psychiatrist, a showman surgeon, a hedonistic dentist turned anaesthetist and a headstrong social reformer – setting out in their careers. Naturally, this being played for laughs, the quartet are as likely to try to best each other as save lives.

Ensuring historical accuracy, bio-medical research charity the Wellcome Trust is closely involved with the series. The cast includes Rory Kinnear, Lydia Leonard and, as a recurring guest, Rupert Everett, as royal physician Doctor Hendrick, a man who loathes innovation, young people, women and patients.

Last testament

I Am Not Your Negro

DVD (Altitude Film Distribution, £12.99)

In his later years, Afro-American writer James Baldwin (1924–87) worked on researching a book he planned to call *Remember this House*. It was a way for Baldwin to reflect on a trio of assassinated civil rights leaders: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, but also a way into writing about his own life.

He never finished the project, but Raoul Peck's documentary, based largely on 30 pages of text Baldwin sent to his agent, tries to do the job for him by mixing Baldwin's words, voiced by

Samuel L Jackson, with archive footage. Considering Baldwin was one of the major writers of his generation – an inspiration to Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison, and a man whose prose could convey tenderness or anger with equal clarity – it's quite some task for the director to set himself.

Perhaps because the film seems imbued with Baldwin's urgency, his need to see change rather than waiting for a political process moving

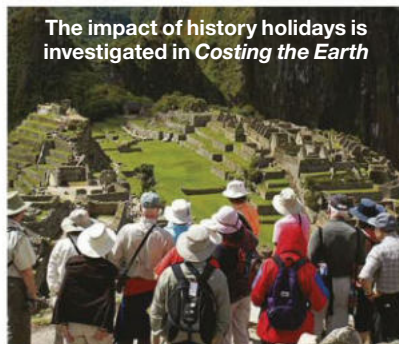
at a glacial pace, it's a task at which Peck succeeds. In

doing so, he creates a work that's a primer for those new to Baldwin's work, and a meditation on the troubled history of US race relations. In its best moments, a mesmerising film.



I Am Not Your Negro uses James Baldwin's writings to tell the story of race in America

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...



The impact of history holidays is investigated in *Costing the Earth*

The holiday season is upon us. As Tom Heap reports for **Costing the Earth** (Radio 4, Tuesday 5 September), this means many of us will journey to historical sites where the sheer number of visitors is becoming a problem. These include Peru's Machu Picchu, at risk from erosion, and Venice, where giant cruise liners are a threat to the lagoon environment. Does an answer to these kinds of problems lie in Amsterdam, where the city council thinks it has found a way to tempt visitors to explore beyond the most popular attractions?

On BBC Two, the Partition season concludes with **India's Partition: The Forgotten Story** (Tuesday 22 August), in which filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, director of *Bend it Like Beckham* and *The Viceroy's House*, crosses India to meet some of those who were profoundly affected by Partition, and historians who have distinct takes on the complex reasons behind the split.

Among the shows on Yesterday are two documentaries that look back at motor-racing in the days when competing was all too often a case of live fast, die young. Look out for **Mike Hawthorn: On the Limit** (Sunday 20 August) and **John Surtees: One of a Kind** (Sunday 10 September).

Birth of a Movement: The Battle Against America's First Blockbuster (PBS America, Thursday 17 August) tells the little-remembered story of William Monroe Trotter, the editor of Afro-American newspaper the *Boston Guardian*, who tried to get DW Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* banned because of its racism.



Sylvia strikes back

**Medical Secretary gives something
back to research and treatment**

Sylvia's friends remembered her for her kind heart, and her strong desire to help others. Even though she suffered lifelong poor health, while also caring for her critically ill mother.

But Sylvia did more than put on a brave face: she struck back against illness by working as a medical secretary, and following medical advances keenly. That's how she found out that with conditions such as stroke, the right treatment and back-up can make all the difference when given promptly.

So it's not surprising Sylvia decided that **one of the best things she could do would be to strike back again, by supporting the work of the Stroke Association – and leave us a generous gift in her Will.**

Today, we take time to remember her. Because Sylvia is still playing an important part in helping us create a future free of stroke, and turn around the lives of thousands of stroke survivors each year.

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BBC History Magazine's

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Alison Weir ●



Michael Wood ●●



Ellie Woodacre ●

OUT & ABOUT

HISTORY EXPLORER

The decline of George III

Charlotte Hodgman and Amanda Foreman explore **Kew Palace** in Richmond, where King George III was incarcerated during several bouts of mental illness

Strolling through the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew on a summer's day is a veritable assault on the senses. Lush green lawns stretch far into the distance; row upon row of colourful plants and flowers turn their faces to the sun, their many scents rising in the heat. So dazzling is the foliage that it is easy to miss the 17th-century, four-storey red-brick house, small by royal standards which is one of the few surviving parts of the Kew Palace complex.

Although today referred to as Kew Palace, the site was originally known as the Dutch House, with a far more impressive Palladian-style building standing opposite. Commissioned by Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1730 and named the White House, today just a sundial marks the site of that long-gone royal residence.

It is for its connection with one of Britain's most famous monarchs that Kew Palace is perhaps best remembered. George III, the so-called 'mad king', was incarcerated here during some of the episodes of mental illness that plagued much of his adult life.

A time of hope

Born in 1738, almost two months premature, the future George III became heir to the throne at the age of 12 following the death of his father Frederick, Prince of Wales. Raised by his mother, Princess Augusta

of Saxe-Gotha, in relative isolation at Kew Palace, the young prince struggled with his studies, unable to read properly until the age of 11, but diligent and keen to learn. The Dutch House became a schoolhouse for the young prince and his brother.

"When George III became king in 1760, the country was delighted and full of hope," says historian and presenter Amanda Foreman. "For the first time since Queen Anne in 1714, Britain was to be ruled by a monarch who had been born in England. George II had been deeply unpopular for his long periods of absence, so hopes were high that George III would be a king who would uphold British traditions and values."

At first it seemed George would tick all the boxes required of a good British king. Despite his early struggles he was exceptionally well educated with a deep passion for learning. He had been taught about the arts and architecture by leading architect Sir William Chambers; he understood mathematics and science; he loved music and sport. He was a Renaissance man in many ways.

George married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in 1761 and the rapidly expanding royal family took over Richmond Lodge at Kew, with their eventual 15 children housed in various buildings around the estate.

America is lost!

Yet the good times weren't to last.

"George was incredibly unlucky to have acceded to the throne when he did," explains Foreman. "He was immediately plunged into the political

The "much maligned" George III in a portrait by Johann Zoffany, 1771



BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY



The red-brick Dutch House at Kew (now known as Kew Palace) played a prominent role in George III's life – from schoolhouse to effective prison



It is for its connections with one of Britain's most famous monarchs that Kew Palace is perhaps best remembered



George III's tin bath in the royal kitchens, the only part of the service wing that still remains

wrangling that was taking place at the time and eventually became a victim of it. He was unfairly branded a tyrant by Americans wanting independence from Britain as well as by the Whigs at Westminster who resented their fall from power on George's accession to the throne.

"But George was far from tyrannical, even in his dealings with America. He took his responsibilities as king incredibly seriously, agonising over decisions and passionately devoted to his country. The idea that he was an ogre who wanted to suppress the rights of Englishmen and limit freedom of speech and freedom of the press was simply a concept that his enemies could use against him."

The 'mad king'

George III's dismay at losing the American colonies is well recorded. Although he strongly objected to American independence from Britain, he accepted that the way in which the colonies were being ruled did need reforming.

"America is lost! Must we fall beneath the blow? Or have we resources that may repair the mischief?" he wrote in the 1780s, commenting on America's fight for its independence. But the colonies were eventually lost and, in 1782, British forces in America surrendered.

The 1780s were to bring more heartache for George III when in 1788–89 he suffered

his first serious bout of mental illness, widely attributed to the genetic blood disorder porphyria. Symptoms displayed during what was probably a mild attack of the disorder in 1765 had been put down to a period of depression and a serious chest infection. But in 1789, the affects of the illness could no longer be ignored.

Symptoms of porphyria include skin sensitivity, strong abdominal pain and bluish urine, accompanied by psychiatric symptoms, all of which George III displayed. Alongside severe stomach pains and terrible insomnia, the king experienced convulsions so violent that his pages were forced to sit on him to keep him safe on the floor until the fits had passed.

The king's behaviour, too, was affected by the condition. He became manic, often behaving inappropriately towards women, and experienced hallucinations. On one occasion he planted a beef steak in the ground, fully believing it would grow into a beef tree. On another, at Windsor Castle, the king was seen talking to, and trying to shake hands with, an oak tree, believing it was the king of Prussia. Meanwhile, at Kew, he would become obsessed with, and try to climb, the Great Pagoda, a 50 metre-high structure that still stands today.

To hide the true extent of his illness, George was moved under duress from Windsor Castle to the relative privacy of Kew. With a team of court physicians unable

to diagnose the problem, the royal family turned to Dr Francis Willis, who was thought to be an expert in mental health conditions. "Willis believed that mental illness was caused by overexcitement and could be cured by calm and control," says Foreman. "The treatments applied to the king reduced him to a childlike figure. If he became manic or overexcited, he was placed in a straitjacket (his "hated waistcoat"). He was denied a knife and fork at mealtimes, which meant much of what he ate was soft nursery food that could be eaten with a spoon or hands. The king wasn't even allowed out of the house by himself and had to earn privileges such as seeing his family or using cutlery."

George was confined to the ground floor of the Dutch House, and a visit today takes you through some of the rooms occupied during his periods of illness. Shoes echo on floorboards, left bare because of the king's hatred of carpet when incapacitated. The small, panelled schoolroom at the front of the house was turned into the king's library, and once boasted a number of works from his magnificent collection of 65,000 books and manuscripts.

In the 18th century, the west side of the Dutch House was connected to a service wing where George III was kept secluded. Most of this was demolished in 1881 but visitors can still see a door in the Page's Waiting Room that once led to the area where the king slept and underwent treatment.

"During the 18th century, the four



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

THE KING EXPERIENCED CONVULSIONS SO VIOLENT THAT PAGES WERE FORCED TO SIT ON HIM TO KEEP HIM SAFE ON THE FLOOR

VISIT

Kew Palace



Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Richmond
TW9 3AB ● hrp.org.uk/kew-palace

humours – black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm – were still believed to influence the body and its emotions”, says Foreman. “If one of these humours was thought to be out of balance, efforts were made to bring it back into line. George III’s medical care was strongly aligned with this theory, and he was subjected to treatments that today we would probably think of as torture.

“Arsenic-based powders were applied to his skin causing it to blister – a method thought to draw the illness out. He was forced to fast, locked up, forced to sleep, bled, and given freezing cold baths as a way of ‘shocking’ the illness from his body. Purgatives such as rhubarb, castor oil and senna were used to treat his constipation and cause diarrhoea, while emetics were given to make him vomit, purging him of disease.”

Monarchy in crisis

When the full extent of the king’s illness was realised, a power struggle broke out at Westminster between Tory prime minister William Pitt and the opposition Whig party. The Whigs called for a regency, which would see George III’s son, the Prince of Wales, rule in the king’s stead as Prince Regent. Pitt, who knew the Prince of Wales (a Whig ally) would restore his rivals to power, resisted a regency for as long as possible. When the crisis finally came to a head, Pitt got parliament to vote in a regency that gave the Prince Regent as little power as possible, essentially making him into a puppet king.

Within a few weeks of the crisis George III

recovered and was able to leave Kew. But in 1801 he suffered a relapse of porphyria. This time the king was duped into a second incarceration at Kew by his doctor, who pretended to be interested in the copy of a self-portrait of Van Dyck, by Nogari – that still hangs above the fireplace in the dining room of the Dutch House. Once there, the king was persuaded to leave his family to undergo treatment once more. Throughout his treatment, his wife and daughters stayed at Kew with him, living in the upper floors of the Dutch House, while they waited for news of the king. These sumptuous rooms were a far cry from the spartan rooms occupied by the king and are still decorated in the fashionable styles of the day.

George had another relapse in 1804 and then a final, full-blown attack in 1810 from which he never fully recovered. Ailing and virtually blind with cataracts, he became permanently insane and finally died in 1820.

“George III has been much maligned by history,” says Foreman. “He is remembered as the ‘mad king’ who lost America, yet he did so much more for Britain. Both George and his wife were incredibly well educated people who played a huge role in promoting Georgian culture, particularly the architecture with which we’re so familiar today. How many people know that it was George III who founded the Royal Academy?”

“George III was a passionate advocate of all things British; the mistakes he made more often than not resulted from circumstances beyond his control. It’s high time to reassess this massively misunderstood monarch.” **H**



Amanda Foreman is an author, historian and presenter. She is currently working on a biography of George III for the Penguin Monarchs series of books.

Words: Charlotte Hodgman

GEORGE III: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Windsor Castle

BERKSHIRE

Where George III retired and died

George III and Queen Charlotte were incredibly fond of Windsor Castle and carried out a series of renovations. George became ill and was confined here in 1788 before being moved to Kew. During his final illness, from 1810, he was kept in the state apartments and is buried in the castle’s St George’s Chapel.

royalcollection.org.uk

2 The British Museum

LONDON

Where George III’s books resided

George III’s collection of 65,000 books was given to the nation on his death and a grand 300-foot long room was built at the museum in 1827 to house them. It is now called the Enlightenment Gallery, with an exhibition on the 18th century. The books are now held at the British Library.

britishmuseum.org

3 Weymouth

DORSET

Where George III holidayed

In 1789 George III travelled to Weymouth seeking the health benefits of salt water. While here, he used one of the first bathing machines to take a dip in the sea. Gloucester Lodge on the promenade became his holiday home and the chalk horse and rider on the hillside overlooking Weymouth bay is said to depict the king.

dorsetforyou.gov.uk

4 Royal Academy of Arts

BURLINGTON HOUSE, LONDON

Where George III’s legacy is found

The Royal Academy was founded by George III in 1768 to promote arts and design in Britain through education and exhibition. The academy moved several times before settling at Burlington House in 1867. Its first exhibition of contemporary art opened on 25 April 1769.

royalacademy.org.uk

5 Royal Pavilion

BRIGHTON

Where a prince regent partied

Built as a seaside retreat for George III’s son, the Prince of Wales, Brighton Pavilion’s most dramatic transformation was in 1815 when John Nash was commissioned to turn it into the magnificent oriental palace we see today.

brightonmuseums.org.uk/royalpavilion



The dining room where, in 1801, George III was duped into a second incarceration. A self-portrait of Van Dyck still hangs over the fireplace

Silent City Meets Living City

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FIVE THINGS TO DO IN SEPTEMBER

Ancient nomads

EXHIBITION

Scythians: Warriors of Ancient Siberia

British Museum, London
14 September–14 January 2018

☎ 020 7323 8181

● britishmuseum.org



The Scythian empire is put under the spotlight at the British Museum this month, with the launch of a major exhibition – the first in the UK for 40 years – on the nomadic tribes who roamed the vast landscape from southern Russia to China and the northern Black Sea from the ninth to the first century BC. The Scythians are known for their exceptional skills on horseback and their heavily tattooed skin. Accounts of their violent clashes with Greek, Assyrian and Persian adversaries support their fearsome reputation. But it is thanks to the discovery of ancient objects preserved beneath Siberian permafrost that we now know more about the Scythian culture.

More than 200 of these objects will be on display at the British Museum, including multi-coloured textiles, fur-lined garments and accessories, unique horse headgear and tattooed human remains.

Horses played an important role in Scythian life and were often buried with their masters so that they could meet again in the afterlife. Masks, saddle pendants and covers for the mane and tail will be among the pieces on show, as well as objects reflecting everyday life: hemp seeds, clothing, wooden drinking bowls, an ancient brazier and even 2,000-year-old lumps of cheese!

Gold applique showing two archers back to back, Kul Oba, 400–350 BC



EXHIBITION

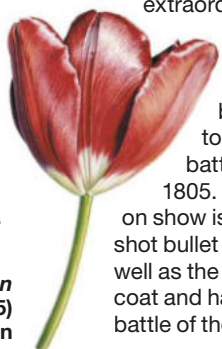
Turkish Tulips

Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co Durham
Until 5 November

☎ 01833 690606

● thebowesmuseum.org.uk

Explore the complex history of the tulip at the Bowes Museum this month – from its role as an allegory of aesthetics and science to its European interpretation as an emblem of sophistication, civilisation and learning. More than 30 contemporary artists, including Damien Hirst, have contributed to the museum's tulip trail.



Tulip 'Helen Josephine' (1975)
by Rory McEwen

EXHIBITION

Nelson & Norfolk

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery
Until 1 October

☎ 01603 493625

● museums.norfolk.gov.uk

This exhibition presents some of the most extraordinary objects connected to Admiral Lord Nelson, from his boyhood in Norfolk to his death at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Among the items on show is the 15mm lead shot bullet that killed him, as well as the undress uniform coat and hat he wore at the battle of the Nile.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Looking Good: The Male Gaze from Van Dyck to Lucian Freud

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

Until 1 October

☎ 0131 624 6200

● nationalgalleries.org

Male image, identity and appearance from the 16th century to the present day are the themes of this Edinburgh exhibition. Some 28 works of art are used to explore topics such as the hairstyles and fashions of courtiers and cavaliers in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as the emergence of the dandy in the 18th century.

EVENT

Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show

IWM Duxford, Cambridgeshire
23–24 September

☎ 01223 835000

● iwm.org.uk

Visitors to IWM Duxford can experience the thrills of its annual summer air show this month, which features a mass Spitfire flypast, daring air displays, dog fights, pyrotechnics, aerobatics and much more. Family entertainment, historic aircraft and a live showground all help to highlight Duxford's role in the Battle of Britain.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

Florence, Italy



by Joanne Paul

For the latest in our historical holiday series, Joanne explores Florence, the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance

What I find so evocative about the Renaissance is its desire to express what makes us human – emotion, pain, frailty and love. There is no better place to come face to face with this passion than in Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance.

Florence sits at the heart of Tuscany, about halfway between Rome and Milan. Founded as a Roman military camp in the first century BC, the city reached its height in the Renaissance, from the 14th–16th centuries. The social mobility of the Florentine Republic meant that families from obscure or even peasant backgrounds could rise to the heights of power and wealth (the most notable example being the Medici, who ruled Florence from the 15th–18th centuries). These families needed to project their status and wealth and so patronised the artists and scholars of the Renaissance, turning Florence into the magnificent treasure-trove of culture it is today.

It is best to seek out these Florentine gems on foot, so find a historic little hotel near the centre and pack some comfortable shoes. You will want to dedicate a day each to the Uffizi

Gallery and the Pitti Palace for some of the best art and sculpture in the world. Get timed tickets to these and the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore (commonly known as the Duomo) to avoid long queues. Standing under Brunelleschi's dome is an awe-inspiring moment not to be missed.

One of the splendid things about Florence is that its churches are not only beautiful historic buildings, but museums and art galleries in their own right. Santa Croce, the largest Franciscan church in the world, contains a crucifix by Donatello and funeral monuments for such notables as Galileo, Dante, Machiavelli and Michelangelo. Santa Maria Novella – the city's first great basilica, with construction beginning in the 13th century – boasts some of the most masterful frescos of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, and a pulpit and crucifix by Brunelleschi (the latter rumoured to have been an attempt at bettering Donatello's crucifix in Santa Croce).

I especially love San Marco, where you can enter the Renaissance cloisters, including those of Cosimo de'

Medici and Girolamo Savonarola, who sought to make Florence a 'New Jerusalem'. San Marco also houses the works of Fra Angelico, including his fresco *Annunciation*, and one of Europe's first public libraries with gorgeous illuminated manuscripts and detailed print books on display. Walking through the open columned space of the library, it's impossible not to feel the presence of the scholars who have worked there in the past.

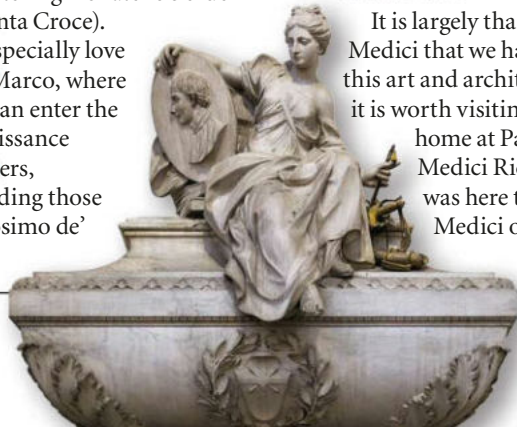
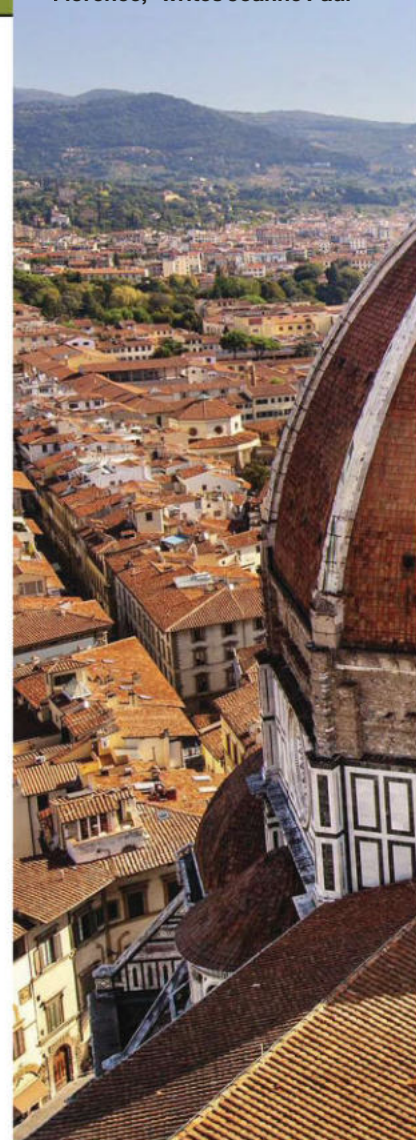
Lesser-known churches also contain some of Florence's best hidden treasures. The church of San Salvatore di Ognissanti houses works by Botticelli (who is buried at the church) and Ghirlandaio. One of its true masterpieces is the 14th-century Giotto Crucifix, which was rediscovered in 2010 in a back room. Restoration has since revealed its vibrant and poignant beauty. Giotto was one of the first to humanise Christ on the cross, a hallmark of the Renaissance.

It is largely thanks to the Medici that we have all of this art and architecture, so it is worth visiting their home at Palazzo Medici Riccardi. It was here that the Medici organised

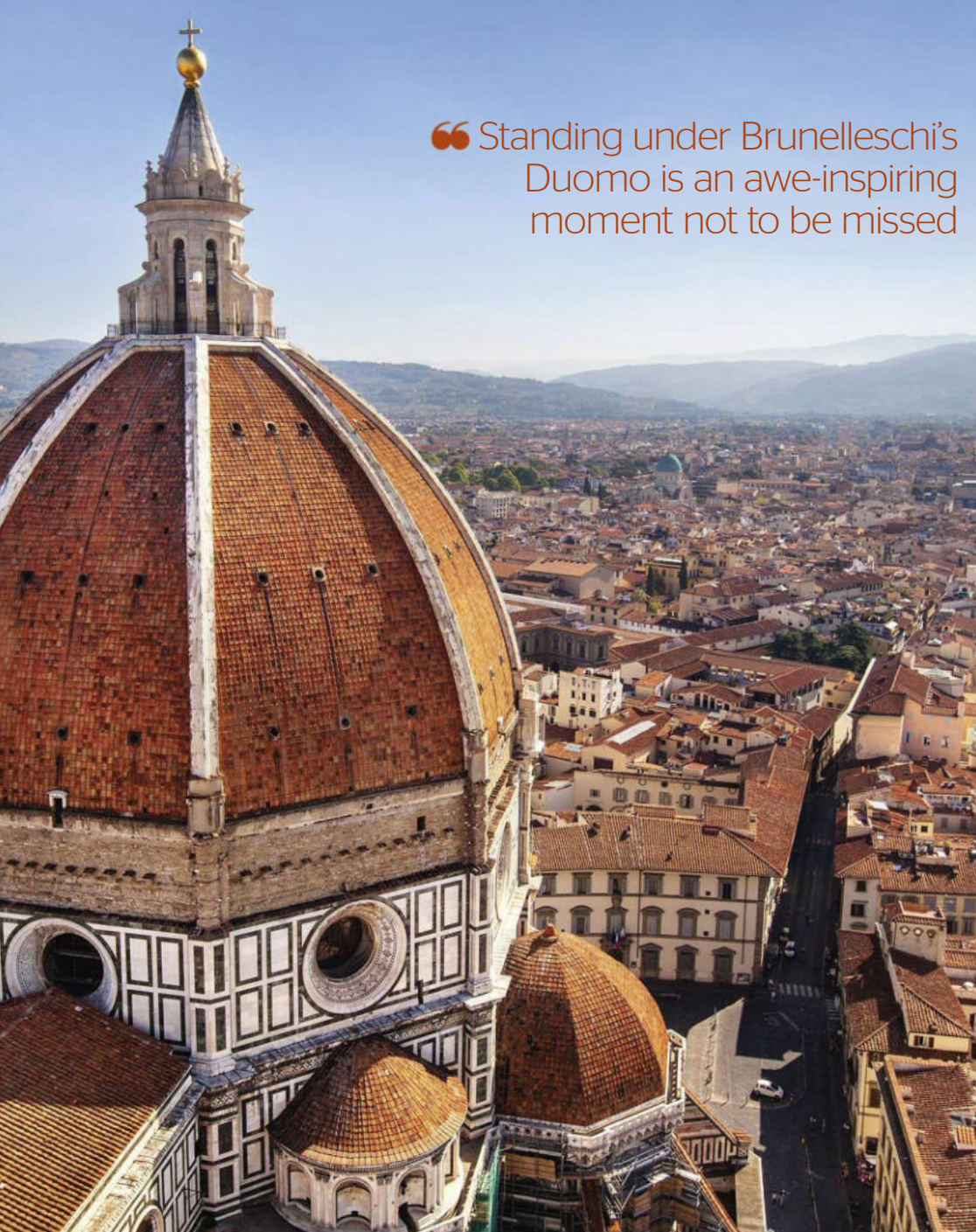
their affairs, entertained guests and ran the city. In the chapel you will find frescos by Gozzoli, in which the Medici are humbly cast as the three Magi, journeying to lay their wealth at the feet of the newborn Jesus.

Once you've had your fill of art and history for the day, there are other ways to experience the passion of Florence. Dip in for some opera at St Mark's Church, also home to the first sculpture by an American to be on public display in Florence – *St Mark* by Jason Arkles, which filled a niche that had been left open for 127 years.

Florence's famous Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore towers over the city. "There is no better place to come face to face with passion than in Florence," writes Joanne Paul



The tomb of Niccolò Machiavelli, in the Basilica di Santa Croce



“Standing under Brunelleschi’s Duomo is an awe-inspiring moment not to be missed

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Florence is always gorgeous but can be unbearably hot in the summer months of July and August. To experience something really special, visit around Easter or Epiphany and join in the church services.

GETTING THERE

There are regular direct flights from London to Florence with BA, Vueling and CityJet. To go very cheaply, you can fly into Pisa and take a short train journey (also allowing you to spend some time in Pisa as well).

WHAT TO PACK

Comfortable walking shoes, light clothing that covers you in the sun and the churches. And don’t forget a camera.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Italian delicacies from Mercato Centrale. A hand-made journal or sketchbook from the Il Torchio workshop. A bottle of Frescobaldi wine.

READERS’ VIEWS

Don’t miss San Marco monastery. It is full of Beato Angelico’s paintings
@PatriziaFgn

The Duomo is breathtaking, also the statue of David is a must-see. I was in awe!
@katemedwards

Visit Piazza Santo Spirito... one of the most beautiful and tranquil squares in the world
@yesIcan121



Just around the corner is the Ponte Vecchio, the medieval bridge still busy with shops and with a gorgeous view of the Arno river. If you like views, from the Piazzale Michelangelo you can see the whole of the city, as well as a bronze replica of Michelangelo’s *David* – the original can be found at the Accademia Gallery.

No trip to Italy is complete without sampling its food and

drink. You can get a taste of all that Tuscany has to offer at the Mercato Centrale, packed with stalls overflowing with meat, olives and cheese. Head to the area around the Basilica di Santo Spirito for dinner, where you’ll find exceptional pizza, coffee and gelato.

We all need a little passion in our lives, and a visit to Florence is good for the soul. As Mark Twain once wrote: “To see the sun sink down, drowned in his pink and purple and golden floods, and overwhelm Florence with tides of colour that make all the sharp lines dim and

faint and turn the solid city into a city of dreams, is a sight to stir the coldest nature, and make a sympathetic one drunk with ecstasy.” **H**

Joanne Paul is a lecturer in early modern history at the University of Sussex with a special interest in the Renaissance. Her most recent book is *Thomas More* (Polity, 2016)

Read more of Joanne’s experiences at historyextra.com/florence

Next month: Peter Cozzens explores Cody, Wyoming

Been there...

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ROCKS BY RAIL

Rocks by Rail, a museum dedicated to the ironstone industry with many interesting artefacts and machines. Look out for our monthly steamings with brake van rides and our quarry working days on Bank Holiday weekends. For more details please consult our website.

www.rocks-by-rail.org

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01636 980000 | www.kelham-hall.com



Gainsborough Old Hall

Often described as a "hidden gem in Lincolnshire", Gainsborough Old Hall is a late-medieval manor house, one of the best preserved timber framed manor houses in the UK. It boasts an impressive Great Hall, an original medieval kitchen and East and West ranges containing a myriad of rooms. Visitors to the Old Hall include Richard III, Henry VIII and John Wesley.

01522 782040 | www.gainsborougholdhall.com



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Four hundred years ago Sir Henry Griffith built Burton Agnes Hall. Twenty-three generations have since lived in, and loved the magnificent Elizabethan home that offers a diverse art collection, exquisite carvings and the finest contemporary works. The walled garden will leave visitors mesmerised and an historic courtyard offers a café, shops and gallery.

01262 490324 | www.burtonagnes.com



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020 74951685 | www.handelhendrix.org



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Set in the Northamptonshire countryside, Kelmarsh Hall is an elegant Palladian style Hall designed by James Gibbs. Explore the distinctive interiors and award-winning gardens to find out more about renowned 20th-century decorator Nancy Lancaster, the history of the gardens and why Kelmarsh is one of the county's hidden gems. Open until October 31st.

01604 686543 | www.kelmarsh.com

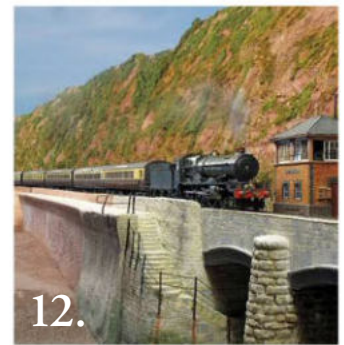
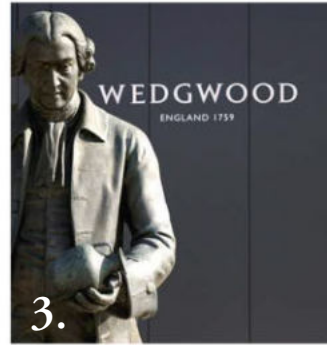
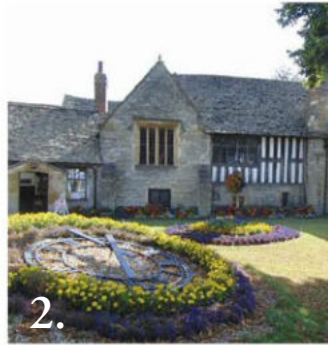


Watts Gallery - Artists' Village

A unique Arts & Crafts gem nestled in the Surrey Hills. Discover stunning Victorian paintings and sculpture in the historic Watts Gallery, wander to the nearby Grade I listed Watts Chapel, taking in the beautiful woodlands and grounds, or find out more about the lives of G F and Mary Watts at Watts Studios before taking a tour of the artists' home, Limnerslease.

01483 810235 | wattsgallery.org.uk

Autumn Heritage Collection



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libmus@freemasonry.london.museum

2. ALMONRY MUSEUM

The Almonry is a beautiful C14th building in the heart of historic Evesham. Set near the Abbey site the museum showcases the town's history from pre-history to mid 20th Century with a peaceful secluded garden.
almonryevesham.org | 01386 446944

3. WEDGWOOD MUSEUM

Trace over 250 years of ground-breaking design and production and discover Wedgwood's influence on industry and society. This award winning museum houses a UNESCO protected collection of historic and cultural significance.
worldofwedgwood.com

4. POLESDEN LACEY

Discover the lavish country retreat owned by socialite Margaret Greville. Designed to be 'fit to entertain Maharajahs', Maggie hosted countless names of the day at this ultimate Edwardian party house.
polesdenlacey@nationaltrust.org.uk

5. THE KEEP MILITARY MUSEUM, DORCHESTER

300 years of the history of our Regiments in an extraordinary castle-like building. Highlights include a reconstructed WW1 trench and four Victoria Crosses.
keepmilitarymuseum.org | 01305 264066

6. CANTERBURY TALES

Explore the sights, sounds and smells of medieval England in this unique experience. Join our costumed guides and revel in the recreated scenes as Chaucer's tales are brought vividly to life.
info@canterburytales.org.uk | 01227 696002

7. ISLE OF WIGHT STEAM RAILWAY

43rd Island Steam Show. 25th-28th August. An action packed show and great family day out. Traditional fairground, steam traction engines, real ale bar and live entertainment.
iwsteamrailway.co.uk

8. DERBY MUSEUMS

Experience a unique museum in the home of the Enlightenment architect Joseph Pickford. Pickford's House shows the grandeur of Georgian architecture and the changes that occurred in the house over its 250 year life.
derbymuseums.org | 01332 641901

9. CALKE ABBEY

Many secrets are yet to be uncovered in Calke Abbey's abandoned rooms. Discover hidden stories, and spaces revealed for the first time, before exploring forgotten views of the parkland.
nationaltrust.org.uk/calke-abbey

10. LEIGHTON HOUSE MUSEUM

Currently housing an exhibition devoted to celebrated Victorian artist Alma-Tadema, with over 130 works on display, his biggest retrospective in London since 1913.
leightonhouse.co.uk | Closed Tuesdays

11. NEWARK TOWN HALL MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Fascinating architectural gem designed in 1776 by John Carr. A working Town Hall that also contains a museum within its beautiful Georgian rooms.
newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk

12. PENDON MUSEUM

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pendonmuseum.com | 01865 407365

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by EUGENE G. WINDCHY Author of *Tonkin Gulf*

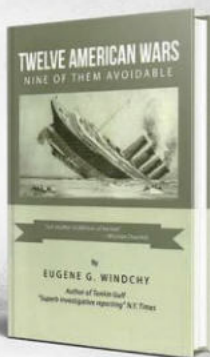
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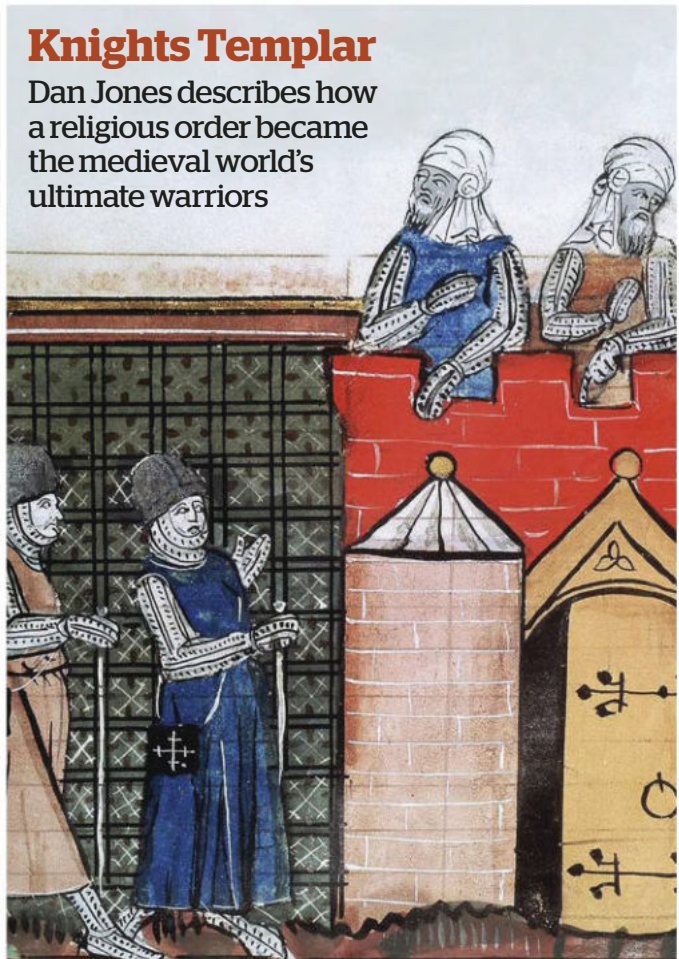
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NEXT MONTH

OCTOBER ISSUE ON SALE 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

Knights Templar

Dan Jones describes how a religious order became the medieval world's ultimate warriors



Global crises

Simon Beard on moments when the world came close to disaster, during the Cold War and beyond

Famine in Ukraine

Anne Applebaum on how Stalin's policies led to millions of deaths in the early 1930s

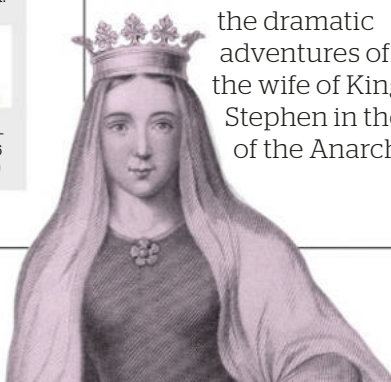
Queen Matilda

Alison Weir recounts the dramatic adventures of the wife of King Stephen in the era of the Anarchy



The mystery of Brunanburh

Michael Wood reveals his new theory about the location of one of the best-known clashes of the Anglo-Saxon era





QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE
QUIZZES
historyextra.com
/quiz

1. What links Sundowner, Tamzine, Royal Daffodil and the Medway Queen?

2. What were Fareham reds?

3. What was motorist, speedboat racer and aviator Mrs Victor Bruce (left) the first woman to do in Britain?

4. Which are the odd ones out? Benedictines, Cistercians, Dominicans, Cluniacs?

5. How is the Roman emperor Valerian said to have been humiliated by his captor, the Persian emperor Shapur?

6. Where is this and why might the congregations of 19th-century churches have been grateful to its builder?



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. They all took part in Operation Dynamo, the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940.
2. High-quality bricks used in the construction of, among other major buildings, the Royal Albert Hall.
3. Be convicted of speeding (in 1911).
4. Dominicans. They are friars while the others are monks.
5. By being used as Shapur's footstool.
6. Bude Castle in Cornwall, built by Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, the inventor of the Gurney stove which heated thousands of churches in the 19th century.

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com or submit via our website: historyextra.com

Q How did the Romans shave themselves and cut their nails?

C Parker, London

Upper-class Romans, and anyone seeking to emulate them, didn't like body hair. Men did shave themselves, but more usually had a 'tonsor' (barber) do it for them, using a range of tools including bronze or iron shears, knives and razors. Using a barber was preferable to doing it yourself, because the crude tools involved called for a great deal of skill.

Wealthy Romans had personal barbers (often slaves), while everyone else, even the working classes, could visit a barber's shop. The more fashionable barbers could become very rich; Emperor Julian was reportedly so outraged at the wealth of one such tradesman that he ordered all barbers be expelled from the empire.

There were some female barbers, too. The first-century poet Martial complained of one: "She didn't shave me, she skinned me."

Barbers cut hair, of course, but were also available to cut corns and remove warts. Their other important role was cutting the fingernails of male and female customers.

Surviving literature suggests that men preferred to get a barber to cut their nails, while in the later Roman empire many women used small metal tools to clean, cut and file for themselves.

Mosaics and statues suggest that upper-class Roman males kept their fingernails short while women generally preferred slightly longer nails with rounded tips. Roman women would often paint their fingernails with henna or a red dye imported from India.

Alternatives to a barber included singeing off beards with various burning materials. Effeminate Roman youths were said to pluck out their facial hair to avoid the five o'clock shadow that surely every Roman male boasted even on emerging from the barber's shop.

There is also plenty of written evidence to suggest that Roman men – and, more especially, women – removed their pubic hair too, by shaving, singeing or plucking it out.



ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's a mouth-watering honey cake from the 14th century

Czech medovník

Late summer is honey season and what better way to use this golden liquid – considered the food of the gods in ancient times – than a delicious medovník (honey cake)?

Honey cakes exist in many forms, but this recipe is believed to have its roots in 14th-century Bohemia, although Russia, Slovenia and Slovakia are among other countries that claim it as their own.

INGREDIENTS

450g plain flour
180g icing sugar
180g unsalted butter
1 egg
1½ tsp baking soda
6 tbsp honey
4 tbsp cream
1 tsp cocoa powder
1 can of condensed milk
200g unsalted butter
100g roughly chopped pecans or walnuts
1½ tbsp sugar
150ml water
50ml rum

METHOD

To make the caramel, heat the condensed milk in a bain marie over a medium heat. Stir occasionally and simmer for 1.5–2 hours

until desired colour and consistency. Set to one side to cool.

Mix butter, icing sugar, egg, honey and cream in a bain marie for five minutes. Then mix flour, baking soda and cocoa powder in a separate bowl.

Combine wet and dry ingredients, mix and cover for 15 minutes or until it's a cookie dough consistency and not too sticky.

Roll the dough into 8-inch circles (I drew these on parchment paper first), using 160g for each. Bake each circle for seven minutes at 180°C and allow to cool. Meanwhile, blend the caramelised condensed milk with 200g butter until creamy.

Brush the sides of each circle with rum water, then layer with cream and chopped nuts. Place in fridge to set for at least four hours.

VERDICT

"A real treat, without being too sweet"

Difficulty: 7/10

Time: 2 hours baking cookies and assembling

Based on a recipe from czechinthekitchen.com



Czech honey cake: nectar from the gods



An allegorical image from c1532 depicting Henry VIII trampling on Pope Clement VII, who refused to annul the king's first marriage

Q Would the English Reformation have happened without Henry VIII's marital woes?

John Cope, West Yorkshire

A France and Spain both play a big part in answering this question. Alongside England, these were the leading monarchies of western Europe. In both, Protestant ideas advanced in the middle of the 16th century, and in both – unlike England – the monarchy remained loyal to Rome.

In Spain, the crown worked closely with the church to crush Protestant dissent, and before 1560 it had effectively disappeared. In France, Protestantism spread among nobles as well as townspeople, and after 1562 the country experienced decades of civil war. The Protestants eventually lost, but it was touch-and-go.

If Henry VIII had remained content with Catherine of Aragon, which European

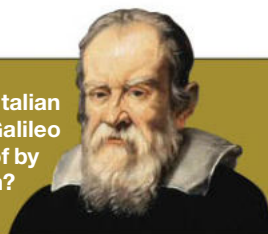
neighbour would England have resembled more? Of course, we can never be sure. England lacked a powerful Inquisition like Spain's, and Protestantism was growing even before Henry broke with Rome. On the other hand, England was more centralised than France, and English nobles had little incentive to espouse Protestantism in defiance of the king.

The most we can say is that almost everywhere in Europe the religion backed by state authority ultimately won the day. The most prominent exceptions to this rule (Scotland and Ireland) lay very close at hand – make of that what you will!

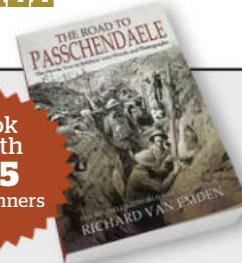
Peter Marshall, professor of history at the University of Warwick

PRIZE CROSSWORD

What was Italian polymath Galileo Galilei accused of by the Inquisition? (see 22 across)



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The Road to Passchendaele By Richard van Emden

A century on from the battle of Passchendaele, Richard van Emden tells the story of the campaign through the words of the men who fought and the photographs they took. The book contains 170 images, some taken by soldiers on illegally held cameras – most of the images have never been published before.

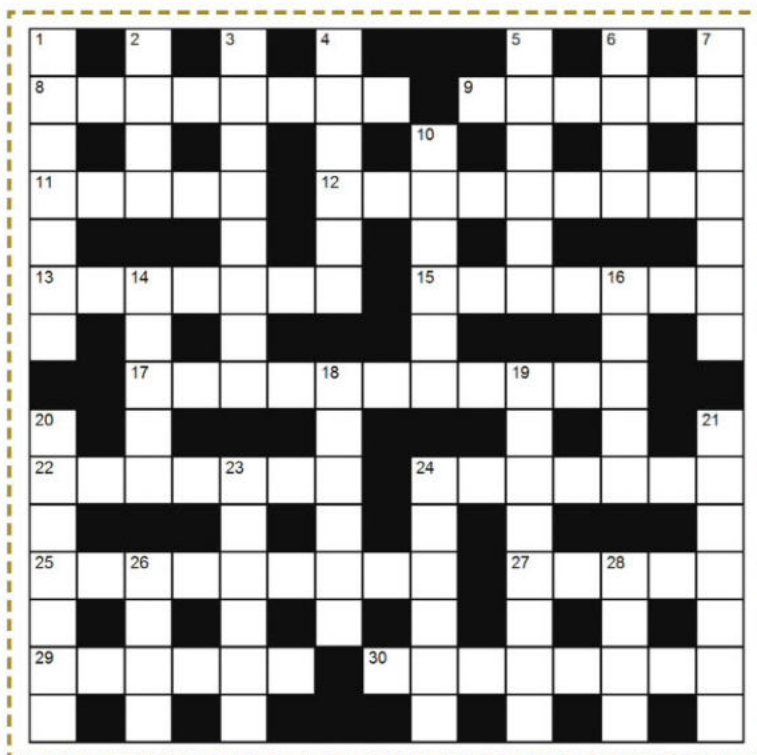
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Across

- 8** Term often used interchangeably with 'Vikings' (8)
9 Thomas, 15th-century knight thought to be the author of a famous reworking of the legendary tales of King Arthur (6)
11 Machine, invented by a former Bletchley Park code-breaker, used in a British alternative savings scheme launched in 1956 (5)
12 eg one of Raphael Holinshed's histories of 'England, Scotlande, and Irelande' (9)
13 Built on both sides of the Euphrates around 2000 BC, it was a major city of Mesopotamia (7)
15 The Quadruple Alliance was formed in 1718, when this country joined the Triple Alliance of Britain, France and the Netherlands (7)
17 Nickname of the paramilitary organisation that played a key role in Hitler's rise to power (11)
22 Galileo Galilei was condemned as such by the Inquisition in 1633 (7)
24 An epic work traditionally attributed to Homer (7)
25 Political movement of the Civil War, advancing the ideas of Commons sovereignty and suffrage (9)
27/5 down (Now the ruins of) the main gladiatorial training area of ancient Rome (5,6)
29 Military Cross-awarded tank commander who later became Archbishop of Canterbury (6)
30 See 3 down

Down

- 1** In 1976, its airport was the scene of an Israeli commando raid to free passengers and crew from a hijacked aircraft (7)
2 Architect who was responsible for rebuilding many of the churches in the City of London after the Great Fire (4)
3/30 across Event occurring in Manchester in August 1819, when cavalry brutally dispersed a political rally of 60,000 people (8,8)
4 Traditionally, a hilltop means of alerting the population to, eg, an enemy advance (6)
5 See 27 across
6 Rigid metal necklace worn by, eg, Gauls and Britons (4)
7 A 'lost' village of Dorset, requisitioned in 1943 as part of the war effort, but never returned by the government (7)
10 County town, which gained prominence when Saint Patrick founded his principal church of Ireland there in the 5th century (6)
14 The founder, in 1526, of the Mughal dynasty of India (5)
16 They are symbolic of the English opponents in a 30-year series of dynastic civil wars (5)
18 Jacques, Swiss-born French director of finances prior to the French Revolution (6)
19 For example, one who fought against Fairfax and Cromwell in the Civil War (8)
20 The third pandemic of this disease, starting in 1852, was a particularly deadly one (7)
21 One of the groups of people that suffered persecution and genocide in Nazi Germany (7)
23 Thomas, an important 16th-century composer of English sacred music (6)
24 Irish warrior-poet, considered to be an invention of 18th-century poet



- James Macpherson (6)
26 Sir Henry ____ 'the Younger', English statesman, a parliamentarian during the Civil War, later executed by Charles II (4)
28 Title assumed by National Fascist Party leader, Benito Mussolini (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

SOLUTION TO OUR JULY CROSSWORD

Across: 6 Emigre 7 Prussian 10 John Cabot 12 Minos 13 Korda 14 Lockerbie 17 Sir Thomas More 20 Edinburgh 22 Stein 24 Arena 26 Common Law 27 Debretts 28 Franco.
Down: 1 Seljuk 2 Richard III 3 Truck Act 4 Mrs T 5 Zion 8 Somme 9 Nasser 11 Balfour 15 Chatham 16 Bar Lev Line 18 Missouri 19 Petard 21 Beaker 23 Newton 25 Elba 26 Cato.

FIVE WINNERS OF COLLECTING THE WORLD

E Good, Derbyshire; A Smith, Leicestershire; J Foxall, West Midlands; D Hill, Tyne and Wear; C Brown, Leicestershire

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"His book about his time in Auschwitz doesn't just remind readers of the Holocaust's full horror, it helps keep us on our toes and alerts us to the warning signs"

Television presenter Nick Hewer
chooses

Primo Levi

1919-87

Primo Levi was an Italian-Jewish chemist, author and Holocaust survivor. His best-known works are *If This Is a Man* (1947), his account of the year he spent as a prisoner in Auschwitz in Nazi-occupied Poland during the Second World War, and *The Periodic Table* (1975), a collection of short stories named after chemical elements. He died after falling from the third floor of the block of flats where he lived in Turin. The coroner ruled that it was suicide.

When did you first hear about Primo Levi?

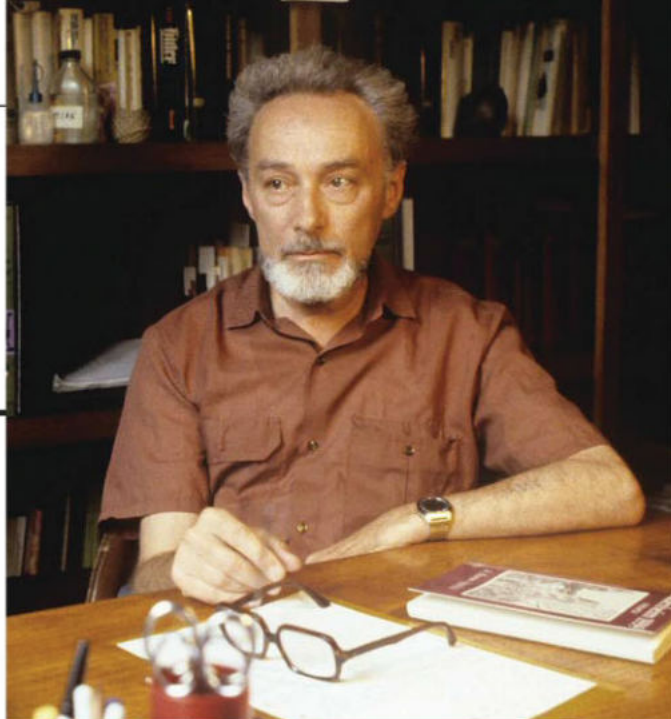
I had a Jewish uncle – a wonderful man from Frankfurt, free of hatred – who my Irish aunt married after he was sent to his family's London office before the war. The poor man lost his family during the conflict – they were murdered by the Germans in Auschwitz, and I think it was that which initially fuelled my interest in the Holocaust and inspired me to read Primo Levi's shocking memoir of his time there, when I was in my twenties.

What kind of person was he?

Levi was an educated person – an industrial chemist actually – who came from a fairly well-to-do family in Turin. He'd had a classical education. Then he suddenly found himself in this appalling camp where everyone was stripped down to nothing – in fact the prisoners were known as 'things'. When faced with terrible choices and physical disability, one's social norms and instincts are reduced to silence. So all that culture and learning he had acquired over the years counted for nothing. Life in the camp was all about the demolition of humanity. Yet his wisdom, understanding and humour helped him through the ordeal.

What made him a hero?

The way he survived the 11 months he spent in Monowitz, part of the vast Auschwitz concentration camp complex, and then went on to write such a remarkably frank but not self-pitying memoir of the experience. He details the cruelty of the Kapos [the trustee inmates who supervised the prisoners] and the Sonderkommandos [death-camp prisoners who oversaw the burning of the bodies of their fellow Jews]. But remarkably, Levi didn't really



Primo Levi in Turin, 1981. "His wisdom and humour helped him through his ordeal in the hell of Auschwitz," says Nick Hewer

blame them for collaborating with the Germans: for he understood that they were simply doing all they could to survive the hell that was Auschwitz.

What was his finest hour?

It's got to be *If This Is a Man*, his almost clinical account of being taken prisoner by the Nazis in Italy and ending up in Auschwitz. It is a great tool to ensure that we never forget the Holocaust and to guard against genocide of any type anywhere in the world. Anti-Semitism is a very light sleeper, in Britain as well as in other countries. It's always there just below the surface. And his book doesn't just remind readers of the Holocaust's full horror, it helps keep us all on our toes, and alerts us to the warning signs and to ensure that it never happens again.

Is there anything you don't particularly admire about him?

Not really. He was an extraordinary individual with precious qualities. The poor man eventually committed suicide... it was probably to do with the guilt of the survivor.

Have you visited Auschwitz?

I visited it in the winter about 15 years ago. It's a terrible place but going there jolts you into realising why it's so important that we remain on the lookout for anti-Semitism today, when there is still a great deal of racism about.

If you could meet Primo Levi, what would you ask him?

I'd have been very humbled to have met him and in all probability lost for words. **ii**

Nick Hewer was talking to York Membery

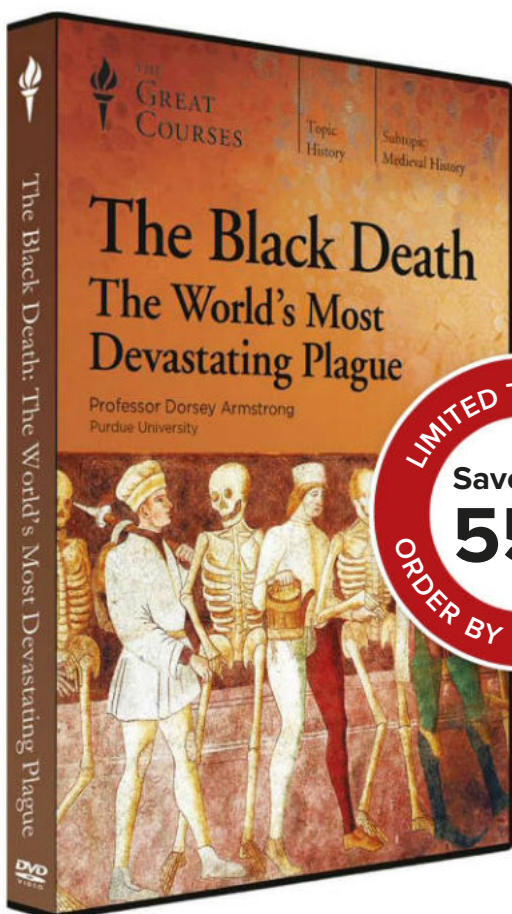
Nick Hewer presents the Channel 4 quiz show *Countdown*. Prior to that, he was an adviser to Lord Sugar on the BBC One series *The Apprentice*

DISCOVER MORE

LISTEN AGAIN

► The writer Edmund de Waal discussed Primo Levi on an episode of BBC Radio 4's **Great Lives**
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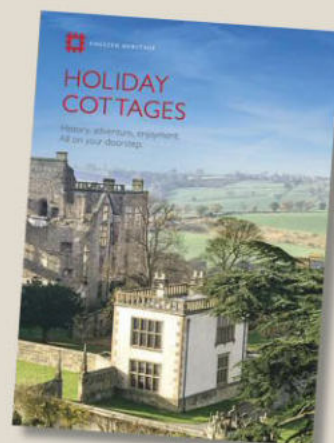


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